

School of Theology at Claremont



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SECRET



OF PRAYER



ENOCH E. BYRUM



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## Preface

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**B**OOKS in almost countless numbers have been written on the subject of prayer, and yet there are justifiable reasons for adding another to the list.

There is an instinctive inclination in people who know God, or know about him, to call upon him for help in times of deep distress or approaching calamity, even though they may not often do so under more favorable circumstances.

Those who have yielded themselves to the Lord, and those who are seeking to know his love, have a longing desire to know how to approach him, and how to pray in order to have a knowledge that he hears and will answer. The import of this volume is to meet that demand by enabling the reader to form a more intimate acquaintance with the Lord, and to know better how to enter into a holy and sacred communion with him.

By looking back through the annals of time, and noting what others have been able to accomplish through prayer, one is given an inspiration of faith and encouragement, in like manner, to make use of the means within his reach, and appropriate the promises of God so as to derive the proffered benefits.

A number of the prayers—both long and short—recorded in the Bible are given that the reader may, by

considering the situation and conditions under which they were offered, be able to know better what to do when placed under similar circumstances, and by the accompanying instructions to be able to form a prayer into words, mingled with faith, that will reach the throne and bring an answer.

The scriptural references are given to aid in a further study of the subjects mentioned. In various chapters is to be found a repetition of scriptures and prayers, also, reference made to persons and circumstances previously noted. These repetitions have been purposely made in order to make the respective chapters complete within themselves, as a book of this nature is often read by the selection of separate chapters rather than continuously from beginning to end.

If, through what is herein written, the reader is enabled to better know how to pray and exercise faith in God, that he might receive the needed benefits and blessing promised in the Word, the author will feel that his efforts have not been in vain.

Yours in Him,

E. E. BYRUM.

ANDERSON, INDIANA.



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## Prayer

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A FEW years ago, while traveling in India, I left the hot plains and began the ascent of the Himalaya Mountains. We first reached the dense forest and jungle, then onward from the foothills wended our way along the mountain side, across gulches and deep ravines. Ofttimes we could look down into the deep chasm of the great cañon below, or over a yawning precipice at our side, but still we went onward and upward until the clouds were reached. On and on we went through the clouds, in a drizzling rain. It was a dark, dreary day, as we penetrated the surrounding gloom, until finally we reached an altitude where we could look down upon the clouds, and found ourselves in a place where the sky above was clear and the sun shining in all its brilliant splendor. Having risen above the gloom and darkness, now far below us, our environments were such that the sudden change caused everything to appear magnificent and beautiful. In comparison, it was as a weary pilgrim along life's journey, beset with many trials and temptations, and pressing his way heavenward, prayerfully trusting for better things, in spirit rises above them, where the sunshine of heaven so enriches the soul that the trials are far below and only the silver lining can be seen.

Along the way among these mountains, occasionally to be seen were long white strips of cloth dangling in the air, one end being fastened to a bamboo pole. These were called prayer-flags. Upon these flags short prayers were written, and the people of Tibet, the borderland of which country we were now nearing, believed that as often as the flags were wafted by the wind so often the prayers ascended to heaven. This, of course, made for them a very easy way of offering up their supplications.

At an altitude of about seven thousand feet, we reached a city. In it was a temple surrounded by about forty prayer-flags, and within was a great drum-shaped prayer-wheel, capable of holding two or three barrels of prayers. This great vat, being filled with hundreds, probably thousands, of prayers, written upon thin fibrous paper, was for the convenience of the worshipers. One turn of the wheel gave merit of so many hundred or thousand prayers, ascending in behalf of the one who turned it.

The heathen, ignorant of the real meaning of prayer, continue their worship, receiving no benefit in this world nor in the world to come. In order to receive the necessary benefits, one should understand and know the worth of prayer.

Prayer is a devotional expression of the heart, and like the rising of incense, ascends to the throne of grace, imploring mercy, seeking help, or giving vent to the praise and thanksgiving of the soul. It may be spoken in audible tones, or may be a whisper, a gentle breathing of the desire of the heart, or but a fervent thought, sent out in petition to him who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," or in the words of the poet:



“Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye  
When none but God is near.

“Prayer is the simplest form of speech  
That infant lips can try;  
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach  
The Majesty on high.

“Prayer is the sinner’s contrite voice  
Returning from his ways,  
While angels in their songs rejoice  
And cry, ‘Behold, he prays!’

“Nor prayer is made by man alone;  
The Holy Spirit pleads,  
And Jesus on the eternal throne,  
For mourners intercedes.

“O, thou, by whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way,  
The path of prayer thyself hath trod;  
Lord, teach us how to pray.”

Prayer, mingled with faith, brings salvation to the sinner, healing to the sick, joy to the sorrowful, and hope to the discouraged. It causes the enemy to flee, unlocks the great treasurehouse of the Lord, opens the windows of heaven, and brings down showers of blessings upon the humble Christian.

Upon the mountain all alone,  
Or on the stormy sea,  
He sees, he knows our every need;  
He hears our earnest plea.

When trials of life come thick and fast  
And tempests blow awry,

A careful vigil still he keeps  
With ever watchful eye.

Surrounded by satanic hosts,  
Or hottest furnace glare,  
When no one else is there to help,  
He hears and answers prayer.

## To Whom Prayer is Offered

FROM the remotest ages, there has been in man a tendency to reverence something of a higher order than himself, an inclination to worship a supreme being. The uncivilized and barbarous people, whose lives are steeped in sin and degradation, and whose minds are filled with superstition, have a conception of a supreme being.

Idolaters, who bow down to images made of wood and stone, attempt to worship God through their idols. The ignorant may have no conception of anything beyond the image to which they bow, but the more brilliant and educated claim that the idol is only a mediator, as it were, between them and the real object of their worship.

The ancient Greeks and Romans, notwithstanding their philosophy and education, implored the gods of mythology on important occasions and in times of adversity.

The American Indians had great reverence for the "Great Spirit," and their anticipations of a "Happy Hunting Ground" in the future were a source of great consolation to them. Although they may have had no knowledge of salvation, their minds in some way inclined toward the great ruler of the universe, whom they believed was able to furnish them happiness in the future world.

The Mohammedans of today believe in God, but do not believe that they come to him through Jesus Christ. They believe that Jesus Christ was a good man, but that Mohammed was a greater man, and that Mohammed was their prophet, or mediator.

In like manner, the Roman Catholics have a form of worship, but worship the crucifix instead of the crucified one. They believe in Jesus Christ, but their worship would be almost meaningless without the image of the cross or what is known as the crucifix.

From the beginning of the existence of man, he was instructed to look to the God of Heaven for his help and protection. After the fall, God sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into the world for the redemption of man, and it was through him that help was received from the Father. Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:23, 24. Before the coming of Jesus Christ, when the people desired help from God, they came to the prophets to have them inquire of the Lord in their behalf, as we read in Hebrews 1:1, 2, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things." Just before he ascended into heaven, he said to the disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18. He is still the mediator between us and the Father.

When Paul was at Athens, he came in contact with a people, many of whom considered themselves far his superior, some of them being philosophers, who were ready to discuss intricate questions. Nevertheless, they



were idol worshipers, and at the same time had an idea of a power superior to their idols, which they termed "The Unknown God." Paul took advantage of their inscription, "To the Unknown God," to give them a knowledge of the true God. His argument, given in the following language, was so convincing that many believed on the true God:

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth in temples not made with hands;

Neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath, and all things;

And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. . . . That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him."

It was the design of the Almighty that all men everywhere call upon him in time of need and worship him through his Son, Jesus Christ, through whom the command was given to preach the gospel to all nations.

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### III

## Who Should Pray?

**J**ESUS CHRIST came to save sinners. Therefore, it is but a natural consequence that the sinner, when convicted and made to realize the weight of his sins, would feel constrained to call upon the Lord in earnest prayer, as it is recorded in Isaiah 55:6, 7, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Here, the sinner is told to call upon the Lord and his humble petition will be heard. There are, to be sure, certain conditions to be met: he must come with repentance and and forsake his evil ways. It is then that his petition will be heard.

The backslider is also invited to humble himself and call upon the Lord for mercy. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." The man who has wandered deep in sin, even to cursing God and everything that is good, when, like the prodigal son,

he comes to himself and realizes his undone condition, if he will only begin to pray and humble his heart before the Lord, he will find the great love and mercy of God extended for his deliverance.

Those who realize that they are lost should take courage and call upon the Lord in prayer. There is given in the New Testament a beautiful example of the love of God toward those who are lost in sin. Jesus tells of the shepherd who had ninety-nine sheep safe in the fold, but that one had wandered among the mountains and was lost. The shepherd did not worry about those that were in the fold, but he went out after the one that was lost, searching until he found it, when, with tender care, he returned it to the fold. In this he represents his great love for the one who has wandered away from the Lord and is lost in sin. It is that one for whom the Lord is still searching. He is ready to listen to its plaintive plea and return it safely to the fold.

The Jewish religion was one of works. However, there were men and women of great faith among the Jewish people, and in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews are recorded many wonderful things wrought through faith. Yet, after relating the wonderful instances of the manifestation of the power of God through faith in that dispensation of time, the apostle closes by saying that God has provided a better thing for us.

The afflicted are instructed to pray. (James 5:13.) These afflictions may be a time of sorrow, opposition, or oppression of mind, soul or body. The elders are instructed to pray for the sick. (James 5:14.) Verse sixteen says: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." All should be encouraged by the words of the

Psalmist, wherein he says: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalms 46: 1.

Everybody should pray. Jesus Christ himself was our example. He prayed; sometimes under adverse circumstances, sometimes giving expression to the Father in thanksgiving; while at other times pleading earnestly in behalf of himself or the people. His words are still ringing out to a lost world: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."



#### IV

### When and Where?

**T**HERE is in the Word of God no rule laid down as to just how often a person should pray, nor just where the place of prayer should always be. There are instances, however, of those who did pray, and something is said about the place of prayer. The mention of these things may be of some benefit to us in deciding what we should do. It is said of Daniel that he prayed three times a day with his window open toward Jerusalem. We may go in special prayer less than three times or more than three times a day, and it is not necessary that we face Jerusalem, as in this day and age of the world, it would be meaningless to us to have our faces in that direction; but to Daniel, no doubt, one of the chief subjects of prayer was that the Holy City might be restored to his people; furthermore, he was instructed to pray toward Jerusalem.

The Psalmist prayed at morning, noon and night.

We have in the New Testament a record of many times when Jesus prayed. Ofttimes he went alone into the mountains. Especially would he do this after some great manifestation of the power of God through him, in the healing of the sick, or the working of some great

miracle, such as the feeding of the five thousand. (Matt. 14:23.) At one time, he took Peter, James and John up into the mountain to pray, and there he was transfigured before them. At another time, just before the important event of the ordination of his disciples, he went alone into the mountain and prayed all night. Whether in Gethsemane, alone on the mountain, or by the sea side, we find him a perfect example as a man of prayer.

It is well to have a certain place of prayer, where we can be alone with God. Whether that place is in some secret chamber, on a mountain, in the woods, or in a desert place, does not matter. The place to be sought is where one can best pour out his heart to the Lord in fervent prayer and communion. We should not forget that in times of necessity prayer can be offered silently at any time and in any place that we may happen to be. A woman once told us of an experience she had on her way home from the city. She said that she became very much burdened for prayer, but having several miles to drive, and it being over bad roads, it was a few hours before she could reach home. During this time, her soul became more and more burdened, but she did not once realize that she could then and there have opened up her heart to the Lord in earnest prayer, so she continued to wait until she should arrive home, where she could enter into her closet and there commune with the Lord. She had not yet learned her privileges in silently praying to the Lord wherever she might happen to be. While it is a blessed thing to daily enter into a secret chamber, or go to some secluded spot to pray, yet we should not forget that the Lord will hear us at any time and any place that we may see fit to send up our petitions to the throne of grace.

A few years ago, a minister of our acquaintance was conducting the service on Sunday, in a grove in the country near Praise Chapel, New Pittsburgh, Indiana, and there was present a great concourse. Soon the sky became black with clouds and there were indications of a great storm of wind and rain. As the lightning flashed and the thunders roared and rolled, the people began to be very much excited, some leaving the ground to seek shelter. By this time the entire sky was covered with dark clouds and rain was beginning to fall. The minister, feeling the burden of the message which he had to deliver, arose and tried to pacify the people, telling them to remain in their seats and God would protect them from the rain and storm. He then dropped to his knees, and called upon God to turn the storm or cause it to cease, in order that the message of truth might be delivered to the people, also asking God to pacify them and remove their fears. He arose from his knees and requested the congregation to remain, assuring them that they would be secure in doing so. Already quite a number had started for home, in their wagons and carriages, going east, west, north and south. The minister began his sermon, and soon the clouds parted, so that not enough rain fell to inconvenience those who remained in their seats. The message went forth with the demonstration and power of the Spirit of the Lord, and the result was a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the people; and many believed and turned to God. All who left the grounds, in either direction that they went, were drenched with rain, and were in a terrible storm of wind. The Lord's part in the matter was so convincing that the people, even sinners, acknowledged that it was by the power of God, and that the minister did not pray that prayer because he saw an opening in the sky, as from a human

point of view there was every indication of an immediate storm.

The time and place of prayer is whenever and wherever necessity demands. God is everywhere, and is ready to lend a listening ear to the humble petition of those who call upon him.



## Position of Body

**A** CERTAIN position of the body is not a criterion by which one may be assured that the Lord will answer prayer. An illustration of this is given in Luke 18: 11-13, where the Pharisee and publican both prayed while standing. The prayer of one was ignored; the other answered. As they went up into the temple to pray, the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

We have no record that this self-important man, praying to be seen and heard of men, ever received any blessing or answer to his prayer.

The publican standing afar off did not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying: "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Jesus said regarding him, "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Here we learn that people may stand while praying, and some receive an answer while others receive no answer. The same may be said of any other position of the body while in the attitude of prayer.

Daniel kneeled upon his knees three times a day to pray and give thanks before his God. (Daniel 6:10.)

Solomon, kneeling before the congregation, spread out his hands before the Lord in prayer. (2 Chronicles 6:13.)

The Psalmist said, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker." Psalms 95:6.

Paul kneeled down and prayed with the brethren at Ephesus. (Acts 20:36.) Afterwards, when his ship landed at Tyre, he met with the brethren, their wives, and their children, all of whom kneeled down on the shore and prayed. (Acts 21:5.)

John, the Revelator, fell at the feet of the angel whom he was intending to worship. (Revelation 19:10.)

There is recorded some wonderful prayers and wonderful answers to prayer where people were in various postures before the Lord.

At one time, when the prophet Elijah went up to the top of Mt. Carmel, "he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." It was while in that position that James says he prayed "and the heaven gave rain." While at this time he continued with importunity, yet the answer was so marvelous that the king had to hasten to find a place of shelter. (1 Kings 18:42-44.)

The Israelites were defeated in their first attempt to take the city Ai. Joshua did not stand and pray, neither did he kneel, but he rent his clothes, and falling to the earth upon his face, prayed.

"Alas, O Lord God, whereof hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord,

what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto that great name?"

The Lord said to Joshua, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them." The Lord further told just what to do in order to be victorious. (Joshua 7:6-11.)

A long prayer was not required on the part of Joshua: he was pouring out his heart in great earnestness. Such prayers reach the throne.

Paul prayed with his feet fast in the stocks. (Acts 16:24.) "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." Their prayers, even under such adverse circumstances, were heard, insomuch that "suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." The result was the conversion of the jailer and his household.

There are times when people are unable to stand, kneel, or bow down before the Lord to offer up their petitions. King Hezekiah at one time had such an experience. He was sick unto death, and was told that he must die. He was not able to arise, but while lying upon his bed "he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord."

"I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight."

His prayer was short, still it was an earnest one and brought an answer. The Lord sent him a message

through the prophet, as follows: "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years." 2 Kings 20: 1-6.

Many people in oriental countries place themselves in a sitting posture while at prayer. In public worship, people should not place themselves in an unseemly position, but everything should be done decently and in order. When alone, sometimes one may take a position that would not be proper or becoming in the presence of others. No matter what the position of the body, it is the humbleness of the heart and reverence before God that enable one to be acceptable in his sight while imploring an answer to petitions or offering up thanksgiving. It is the humility of heart that causes one to find favor in his sight.

While a person may pray in various positions, according to the circumstances and place, and receive an answer from God, yet the more common and reverential posture seems to be that of bowing before him on bended knee. We read in Romans 14: 10, 12, that "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

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## VI

### Demonstration and Noise

MANY varied experiences can be told of the religious demonstrations and manifestations among the people throughout the world, who are seeking favor with God. It may be of interest to call attention to some of the performances practiced by the heathen and others who know but very little about the true God.

Among the heathen nations in Africa, India, and other countries, there are hermits and ascetics—those who are seeking to be holy men. In order to become so, some of them sit on sharp spikes, torture and lacerate their bodies, and wear iron bands about their bodies and necks. Some isolate themselves from the people, finding a home in some secluded spot in the mountains, while others select a more public place, and there cover their bodies with ashes and almost starve themselves. Some hold up a hand or arm until the joints become stiff. This is not an over-drawn picture.

In Northern Africa, I visited the place where the “head-choppers” have their annual meetings. During their religious performances, they use something like a hatchet, or large knife, to cut and lacerate their heads; while they leap about and scream at the top of their voices, in a most hideous manner, when celebrating their



feast. While in this frenzied state, a goat, or some other animal, is seized and literally torn into pieces, being eaten without taking time to dress or cook it. The blood flowing from their heads and from the animal they have torn to pieces presents a horrible sight.

A number of years ago, an acquaintance, when traveling in Egypt, witnessed a similar scene during the celebration of the tenth day of a certain month of the Mohammedans, in commemoration of the assassination of "El Hassan." There was a street parade, in which many people took part. Certain ones would cut their heads with knives, while others struck their breasts with either their right hands or a chain. This man said that "Infuriated with their demonstration, they seemed, with every stroke, to almost crush their breasts, as they moaned out 'El Hassan, El Hassan, El Hassan.' Others, whose bodies were bare down to their waists, carried scourges made of small chains, with which they smote themselves in the most beastly and barbarous manner, leaving great bruises with every stroke; and even inflicting gashes from which blood oozed forth and trickled down over the lower parts of their bodies."

These performances have not only actually taken place during years past, but such demonstrations are still being made in some countries, by people who believe in God but know nothing about his saving-grace, as well as by the heathen who know nothing about God.

In the Bible we have record of a performance of similar nature. This was at the time that Elijah and the priests of Baal gathered together on Mt. Carmel in a contest for supremacy. There was an agreement between them that they should each build an altar, putting a sacrifice upon it, but placing no fire thereon, as they were to call on their god. The one that answered by fire, consuming the

sacrifice, should be considered the true God. Elijah, knowing the power of the God of heaven, whom he served, was quite willing to undertake such a test or public demonstration, even though he was alone and on the other side were four hundred and fifty priests of Baal. Arrangements were made, Elijah giving them the first chance. When their sacrifice was ready according to agreement, they offered up a prayer, saying: "O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar that was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked. And they cried aloud and cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded." Now came the time for Elijah to call upon his God. He had the altar repaired, digged a trench about it, and filled it with twelve barrels of water. Then, when everything was ready and he had called the people together, he prayed:

"Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

Although he did not lacerate his body, or go through any unnecessary manifestations, yet Elijah prayed with such confidence that the Lord of heaven heard and answered. "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed

the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

When Moses and the children of Israel were at the Red Sea, with Pharaoh's army pursuing, the Lord showed his protecting power by sending a cloud which overshadowed them, hiding them from the enemy. However, the sea stretched before them. Knowing that the enemy was hotly pursuing, this was, no doubt, a time of great anxiety. Moses felt the responsibility of the moment, but he had great confidence in God, realizing that everything depended upon his faith, and upon God's fulfilling his promise. No doubt, great fear was upon the people, as Moses said to them, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

It is not known just how long a time elapsed before there was any further manifestation of the power of God, but the situation was such that Moses began to pray and cry mightily unto the Lord; and the Lord said to him, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." Exodus 14:12-16. "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind on that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went through the midst of the sea upon dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto

them on their right, and on their left." Thus they were delivered out of the hand of the enemy.

Joshua was the leader of the Israelites when they came to pass out of the wilderness to go over into Canaan. Reaching the River Jordan, they found its banks overflowed. Here Joshua did not tell them to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, but had them go forward, and even to step into the water, believing that God would part the waters and enable them to pass safely to the other side. "The waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." Joshua 3: 16, 17.

These instances from the Bible are mentioned for the purpose of showing how people of God may act differently according to the circumstances, or even under similar circumstances, and yet find like favor with God.

At the time of the taking of Jericho, we do not know how much prayer was offered, but the people of Israel followed the directions of the Lord through his servant Joshua; and through their faith in the Lord and following his instructions they were enabled to be victorious. They marched around the city each day for seven days, blowing their rams' horns, and on the seventh day marched seven times, followed by the blowing of their horns and shouts of victory. When they had fully complied with the command of the Lord, the walls fell.

The Pharisees were a people who claimed to worship

the Lord, yet knew very little about his love and the benefit of his blessings. They made great pretensions by offering long prayers on the street corners and in the synagogues where they could be seen of men. When fasting, it was their custom to go with disheveled hair and faces unwashed, in order to attract the attention of people toward their sanctimonious pretensions. Such worship would not bring to them the favor of God.

A few years ago a man living in the State of Illinois wrote to us, requesting prayer for a certain thing he desired from the Lord. He asked that prayer be offered on a certain Sunday morning, stating that he had already secured a dry goods box, which he intended having placed on a street corner, where he expected to stand in the afternoon of that particular Sunday and proclaim what the Lord had done for him. The outcome of the matter was that the man failed to receive the expected answer to his prayer. He was too much like the Pharisee, as he entertained a selfish motive, insomuch that his mind was almost entirely devoted to the study of how he might make a great demonstration before the people, that he might be looked upon as the hero of faith, and as one upon whom the Lord delighted to show favor. In permitting his mind to dwell upon this so much, he almost forgot the real humility of heart that was necessary, having more in mind the gaining of honor to himself rather than to God. His failure to obtain help was not because his case was such an extraordinary one for the Lord, as many others had received answers to prayer similar to that which he was hoping to receive.

At one time the temple, which was a house of prayer, was desecrated by the money changers, and those who sold doves, making it a place of merchandise, thus taking away the real sanctity of the place. With indignation,

Jesus drove these people from the temple with a scourge made of small cords, overthrowing their tables, and giving them to understand that the temple was to be regarded as a sacred place unto the Lord.

When Martha and Mary came to Jesus weeping because of the death of their brother, he was touched with compassion in their behalf, insomuch that it is said, "Jesus wept." Then he spoke the words which caused Lazarus to come forth from the grave.

Thus, the demonstration, manifestation, and noise may vary according to circumstances and the dispositions of the people. Some, when greatly blessed of the Lord, are inclined to leap, and shout with a loud voice; others laugh or sing, and still others give vent to their feelings with weeping for joy, while some will sit quietly enjoying the riches of the glory of God. The quiet ones may be enjoying just as much of the power and grace of God as those who make a great noise or demonstration otherwise. There are extremes, which sometimes bring a reproach upon the cause of Christ, that is, when people pretend to be filled with the power of God and begin leaping and shouting in a hideous manner, "falling under the power" and acting unseemly. Instead of being actuated by the Spirit of God, they are either hypocritical or under the power and inspiration of a false spirit. However, when the people of God lift up their voices in praise and thanksgiving, even leaping and shouting, by the Spirit of God, it is a source of inspiration to encourage the faith and confidence of weaker ones.



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## VII

### Earnestness

**A** MINISTER was once severely afflicted in body, and realizing there were many promises in the Word of God favorable for his healing, if he could only exercise the proper faith, he was anxious to be made well by the power of God. He had known of others being healed in answer to prayer, and had often prayed for himself, but still the work was not accomplished. He felt that he could not preach the entire gospel without preaching on the subject of divine healing. However, his affliction had now become so great that unless he received help he would soon be unable to preach any part of the Word. Very often he would go alone to pray, but seemingly could not get enough in earnest to receive the needed help. Reading in the Bible of someone who was in distress and cried before the Lord, he thought it a simple matter to undertake to cry when he had not the earnestness to enter into it with a feeling necessary to produce real weeping from the heart. Still, as his case was becoming serious, he decided that he would at least make a desperate effort to do as many others had done and had received help from God. Therefore, he put forth an effort to weep and cry before the Lord, soon breaking forth into a flood of genuine tears and weeping. God saw the earnestness of his heart, and

not only enabled him to weep, but touched his body and made him well.

A more striking example of earnestness cannot be given than that of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26: 38, 39.) Two things are very noticeable in regard to him and his prayer: One is the great earnestness manifest, and the other is his perfect submission to the will of God.

After James had been killed by the sword and Peter cast into prison, bound with two chains, and guarded by soldiers, over in another part of the city, the church gathered together in earnest prayer, and it is said they prayed without ceasing. The Lord took note of their earnestness, answering their petitions by sending an angel to open the prison doors and let Peter out, after which he soon made his way to the place of prayer, where he could tell the wonderful experience of his deliverance.

There are people who feel they are really saved, yet when they undertake to pray in secret they seem to have no real spirit of prayer, oftentimes even falling asleep on their knees. There may be various causes for such a condition. Sometimes the enemy will try to take advantage of a person by casting a gloom or stupor over them. In such cases it is necessary to vehemently take a stand against the enemy by rebuking him and then communing with the Lord as with a friend. Sometimes a difficulty arises from some weakness of the body, or from being very tired on account of over-work. At such times, when rest is necessary, it may be wisdom not to prolong the efforts of prayer, but in a short petition commit everything into the hands of the Lord, and take the needed rest. Again, there are times when the drowsiness comes from over-eating, or a lack of exercise or fresh air.

Some have difficulty in praying in public, or performing

the necessary duties in family worship, because of what they call a "man-fearing spirit." In many cases this can be overcome by faithfully performing the duties and especially by first calling upon God for grace and strength and then moving out in prayer when the opportunity offers itself. The young convert should not become discouraged at such feelings, nor attribute them to the devil, as it would not be strange for our weak humanity to assert itself on this wise. However, if possible, the devil may take advantage of a person's human weakness to prevent a performance of public duties. Feeling such weakness is not necessarily an evidence of a lack of salvation, nor of a perfect consecration. Paul tells us how he sometimes preached the gospel with fear and trembling. We also find that the apostles, after they had been commanded not to speak any more in the name of Jesus, prayed for boldness. After praying for boldness, they went forth performing their duty, and God answered their prayers according to their petition.

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## VIII

### Weeping

**A** VERY striking illustration of this subject is that of Jesus when nearing the City of Jerusalem. "He beheld the city and wept over it." Then he told of the great desolation that was to come upon the city. Again, we hear him saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time shall come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Luke 13: 34, 35.

Kings, prophets, and priests wept before the Lord when they saw coming upon the people great calamities which none but the hand of the Lord could hinder. Ezra, after being awakened to the condition of the people of Israel, because of their disobedience to the Lord, rent his garment and fell upon his knees, and spread out his hands unto the Lord and said, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniqui-

ties are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. . . . O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this." Ezra 9:6-15.

"Now when Ezra had prayed and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore." Ezra 10:1.

There are people who become almost too hard-hearted to weep. Again, there are those who have hardened themselves through habit, and have so learned to control themselves against giving vent to their feelings that years of such practice has made it difficult for them to shed tears, even when their hearts seem to be almost breaking, as it were, because of sorrow or a burden of some kind. To some, it would seem that such people have no feeling, when the truth of the matter is that oftentimes their sorrow is deeper than that of those who can readily give vent to their feelings with weeping and wailing. Such people generally feel that it would be a wonderful relief could they only break forth with a flood of tears. Again, there is another class of people who are governed largely by affectation. They can, almost any time, at a word, have tears trickling down their cheeks, and are apparently much broken up in spirit, when it is scarcely anything more than force of habit through affectation, or a habitual lack of exercising control over their feelings. Such tears are sometimes called "crocodile tears," and such weeping has but little weight in the sight of the Lord. They are not prompted in the same manner as were the tears of Hezekiah, of which the

Lord took note, when the king in his distress called upon God.

While it is a good thing to occasionally get into that earnestness in communion with the Lord where we can weep before him, yet tears and weeping are not always required in order to have faith in God, and to receive an answer to prayer. However, a tenderness may be cultivated in regard to such things in the same manner as in the instance given in the first chapter of second Peter, wherein the apostle gives the following advice: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." A cultivation of these qualities will enable a person to have his lacks supplied on the line of tenderness and compassion, and also to have the necessary control of his feelings before others and before the Lord. While it is necessary to make an effort to cultivate and control the feelings in order to manifest greater tenderness, or to avoid affectation, yet a person should act naturally, or in other words, be himself and not someone else. He should be where he can properly give vent to his feelings in the Spirit of the Lord and not quench the Spirit; yet at the same time be governed by the laws of propriety, according to the place and circumstances.

It is written in the Word of God concerning Hannah, who was childless and very much desired a son, "And she was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore." 1 Samuel 1:10. She continued praying before the Lord, and "Spake in her heart; only her lips



moved, but her voice was not heard." However, the Lord heard and answered her prayer, the son that was afterward born becoming the great prophet Samuel.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalms 126:5, 6.

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## IX

### Secret Prayer

**I**T is when people often come in close contact with each other that they become near and dear friends, and there exists an affinity which otherwise cannot be realized. When they have proved, to each other's satisfaction, their loyalty and worthiness, there is an affiliation in the friendship formed, which creates confidence to an extent that will enable them to confide in each other the burden of their hearts, for counsel and consolation. So it is with our relationship with God. We need to come into close contact with him often. We need to become well acquainted with him, in order to gain his confidence and to have confidence in him. Frequent personal interviews, where we can have a heart to heart talk with him, are what we need. There is no better way by which all this may be accomplished than by secret prayer. Jesus set us the example when he frequently went alone to the mountain, to a desert or solitary place to pray. It was there that he could, undisturbed, commune with the Father. He also said, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6:6.

There is a sweetness in communing with the Lord alone which many have never realized. In order to enjoy

the secret communion with the Lord, and receive the necessary benefits, one should talk to him as he would to his most confidential friend. It is when entirely alone that the heart can be unburdened, no matter what the issue—whether it is in time of deep trial and trouble, or of discouragements or perplexities, or whether it is only a heart to heart talk for wisdom and consolation.

A few years ago, there was in attendance at a camp meeting in the State of Washington, a farmer who had been in the habit of arising very early in the morning and going to a certain place on his farm for secret prayer. There, all alone, where no one else was near to listen, he would pray aloud.

While at the meeting this man found a place for prayer, which was within a few hundred yards of the many tents that were pitched on the campground. Very early in the morning, before the break of day, and about ten or eleven o'clock at night, his voice could be heard in every part of the grove, as it sounded forth from his place of prayer. It did not come in soft tones, but as voluminous as he was capable of making it in the fervor of his earnest supplications.

The people, weary with the toils of the day, were awakened from their slumbers and thus unnecessarily disturbed, because this man had not learned to adapt himself to the surrounding circumstances. He had not learned to pray quietly when necessity demanded.

Some people do not think they can pray except they do so at the top of their voices. There has not been put forth an effort to exercise the required self-control demanded by the occasion and environments.

It seems that Daniel had stated times for his secret devotion, and no doubt became so fervent as to forget his surroundings, even though he may not have been

boisterous, and perhaps was not conscious of others being near listening to his petitions. Nevertheless, his enemies knew of his time and place of prayer.

In public is a good place to pray for others and for the benefit of those present, but alone with God is where personal needs can best be presented. There, undisturbed, the soul is unburdened, petitions offered according to the needs, and the prayers mingled with the necessary thanksgiving. Never wait for trials to come as an occasion to prayer. They will come in due time. There should be a daily communication until one feels in his natural element and loves to linger in prayer until he is the recipient of an assurance that the Lord has heard and will guide and direct in the necessary undertakings. The soldier does not idly wait until a battle is on before he starts to prepare himself for the conflict, but he drills and practices each day, so that when the time comes for meeting the enemy he is in readiness. He must drill in such a manner as to be prepared for quick action, or a prolonged siege.

There are times when prayers must be said quickly, and to the point, and an instantaneous faith exercised; while at other times, there may be a prolonged siege and the circumstances may be such as to require importunity and a steady holding up of the shield of faith against the enemy. A short prayer may sometimes bring an unquestionable assurance to the soul of victory for the thing desired and yet there be a constant fight of faith for quite a length of time afterwards, before the thing is fully accomplished or a full realization of answered prayer experienced.

As prayer is essential to a life of faith, it is not only necessary to become well acquainted with the Lord, but to often commune with him. In the secret chamber, or in some secluded spot, the Christian may win many a

battle against the enemy, even though the conflict may have been hot and fierce and of long duration. Assailed on every side, opposed, accused, oppressed, and almost crushed in spirit, weary in mind and body, the one who is accustomed to appealing to him, who is a very present help in time of trouble, flees to a place of secret prayer. There his heart is unburdened, the story told in child-like manner, help and protection implored, and soon the cloud is lifted and the spiritual sky is clear. The Lord seems to have sent an angel to strengthen his care-worn child, whose soul, seemingly with eagle wings, surmounts the difficulties and arises above them all.

The victories won prepare the way for meeting the enemy with boldness, and the strength derived through exercise of faith in former battles has given the necessary qualifications to successfully meet the enemy in the hottest conflicts of the future.

As the engine room of a great manufacturing concern is the place for furnishing the power for operating every machine in the establishment, just so the secret chamber is the power house of the Christian. It is there that he learns the will of God concerning himself, as well as regarding other things of interest to him, and, like the electrician, is able to "push the button" which will set the machinery in motion.

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X

## Prevailing Prayer

**T**O prevail means to gain the victory, and to prevail in prayer is to "pray through" as some express it—to be an overcomer. It is to get hold of the promises of God, and with unwavering faith, claim them as your own, not merely hoping that sometime you will gain the victory, but exercising faith that brings the victory now.

It does not always necessarily require a long continuous supplication and battle in order to gain advantage over the power of Satan. Sometimes a few words, accompanied by definite faith, will rout the enemy or bring about the desire of the heart. However, when it becomes necessary to prolong the petitions and earnest supplications, do not give up the struggle, but take courage by what others have accomplished by prevailing upon the Lord at times when the responsibilities were great and failure meant disaster.

When the children of Israel were in battle, and the enemy in great numbers came against them, Moses took his stand upon the top of a hill, and in his hand was a rod, by which he had performed wonders in the sight of Israel previous to that time. "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when



he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book." Exodus 17: 11-14.

Sometimes there are conflicts, or battles with the enemy, which involve a whole congregation or many people scattered throughout the world, where the principal responsibilities rest largely upon one or two persons, who need the immediate aid of others to help them bear the burden and stand firmly at their post, as did Moses, while others fight valiantly against the enemy.

At one time, when Jacob was to meet Esau with four hundred men, he became very much alarmed, fearing that Esau was coming to smite him in battle. Jacob undoubtedly went to the Lord in earnest prayer, and through his determined effort gained the victory, insomuch that when he met Esau they came together as brothers and embracing each other wept. Otherwise, a great battle might have ensued. God can, and will change the hearts of men, sweeping away enmity and differences of long standing, and bringing about peace. Sometimes we get into close places where everything depends upon an immediate answer to prayer, with a complete changing of things that are beyond our control.

A few years ago, while we were living in Grand Junction, Michigan, one very windy day a messenger came running to my office, crying, "The barn is on fire." The wind was blowing a heavy gale from the west almost directly upon my house, which was but thirty-five feet

from the barn, with some smaller buildings and a high hemlock fence between. A few minutes later I was on the roof of the west wing of the house, and others were carrying water in pails, which I threw upon the roof, as there was no fire protection in the village. From the barn to the house there was a solid volume of flame, and it was only occasionally that I could ascend the roof and throw a pail of water between the rolling flames. While doing so, I was calling upon the Lord to preserve the house. One end and side of the building were already on fire, as was also a part of the roof. Soon the flames reached the roof of the main part of the building. One of the water carriers told me to come down, as there was no hope of saving the building. Believing that God was true to his word, I called for more water, hoping in some way to prevent the building from burning. The brother who had been throwing water on the main part of the building, could remain there no longer. People were carrying the furniture out of the rooms below. Again, I ventured to quote the promises of the Lord; "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." I told the Lord that I was abiding in him and his words abiding in me, and I believed his promises to be true; and that I placed that building in his hands, believing that he would prevent its burning. Just then a brother came and told me to come down, informing me that the room below was on fire. I hesitated a moment. I knew that the outside of the house was on fire, and to think that fire was also on the inside, made it appear a hopeless case. I turned to the brother, and said, "No sir, bring more water." It seemed that my faith grasped the promise and that I had prevailed with the Lord. Just then the wind changed and began blowing almost directly south. In a few

minutes we had the fire under control so far as the house was concerned. I glanced at the house on the same lot on which the barn stood, and saw that it was soon to be enveloped in flames. I realized that if that house burned, with the wind in that direction, it would take our office building just across the street. Once more I looked earnestly to the Lord, and said "Lord, save both buildings." Again, almost instantly the wind changed, blowing in a south-easterly direction, thus taking the flames half way between the two buildings, until the barn was completely consumed by the flames. I was not the only one who was praying, but have always believed that had I not stood firm in faith at that critical time the buildings would have burned. Sinners, who had witnessed the whole affair, afterwards remarked that they did not understand how it possibly could happen in that way. They said that not one out of a thousand buildings could escape under such circumstances. We, who were praying, knew the secret of the matter, and have always given God the praise and glory.

A few years ago, while at a camp-meeting, in Louisiana, one Sunday a few of the ministers were invited to take dinner at the home of a brother, which was only a few steps from the camp-ground. While there, a boy of about twelve years of age, who was the son of the brother we were visiting, fell several feet from the end of a porch, striking his head and shoulders on the hard ground. He was taken up in a seemingly lifeless condition and was carried into the house. As soon as he was placed upon a cot, seeing that he was still alive, we gathered around for prayer. Several prayers were offered, but there seemed to be no change for the better. News of the accident was soon spread throughout the camp, and people gathered to witness the scene. A physician, who

was in attendance at the meeting that day, being a friend of one of the ministers, and knowing that those present believed in faith and prayer, offered to come and examine the child without further interference in the case. He was permitted to do so, and found that the boy had received a concussion of the brain and was paralyzed. He pricked the child's body in several places with pins, but there was no flinching. He stated that there was no hope for the boy, and that should he live, he would be a paralytic and cripple for life. Brother R. H. Owens, the minister who had principal charge of the meeting, went with me into a grove near by to pray. There we earnestly plead with the Lord to know his will regarding the restoration of this child. In much earnestness we prayed, and finally said that if he was alive when we returned, we would take it for granted that it was the will of God to heal him. Upon our return to the house, we found him in the same condition as when we left. Again, we laid our hands on him and prayed, expecting that he would be raised up within a very short time, but he continued in the same condition. This was beyond our understanding, yet we believed that God would in some way raise him up that he might get glory out of it. Soon the people from the camp-ground began passing through the house as they would to view a corpse, until almost everyone on the grounds had seen him in his critical condition. He was not able to move any part of his body. When it became time for the evening service, we left the room, believing that God would yet glorify his name. As services were begun, earnest prayers were offered by the church, then for a short time there was a song service. That evening, as I arose before a large audience, and after reading a few texts of Scripture, began the presentation of a message on faith and confidence in God; in walked

the boy who had suffered the accident, and, with a smiling countenance, took a seat in the back of the pulpit. He was made every whit whole. This was truly a time of great rejoicing, and had a wonderful effect upon the people, nearly all of whom had seen him while he lay helpless upon the cot. We could then understand why the Lord did not immediately restore him. It was his will that the people of that country, who had been opposing the truth on divine healing, should themselves witness a manifestation of his power.

In order to prevail with the Lord, it is necessary to lay hold upon his promises as your own. An account of the prayer of Elijah is recorded in the eighteenth chapter of First Kings, where after three and one-half years of drouth, Elijah went to a certain place to pray for rain. "And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees. And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while that the heaven was black with clouds and wind and there was a great rain."

Elijah did not begin his prayer for rain because he saw a great cloud in the sky, for the sky was clear. He did not stop praying when the servant came back and said there was no sign of a cloud, but continued his prayer until the servant had not only gone seven times but said that he saw a little cloud arising out of the sea, which appeared like a man's hand. It was then that Elijah's

prayer ceased, and no doubt he shouted the victory, realizing he had prevailed in prayer.

We should seek to know the will of God, and to act upon it. The Lord loves to help his children in time of need. After having learned the will of God, we should pray expecting him to answer according to his promise.



## XI

### Importunity

*He 11:5-16*

**T**HERE are recorded in the Bible a number of cases of importunity. To importune is to urge with frequent solicitation, or in other words, presenting your needs so often that it becomes troublesome to the one to whom the petition is made, where otherwise there is apparently no heed given to the request or supplication. Importuning with the Lord is coming often to him in prayer for the fulfillment of the desire of our hearts regarding any certain matter or thing.

In the eighteenth chapter of Luke, Jesus gives us to understand that it is right and proper to thus press our way through to victory, even though it may require frequent entreaties.

“And he spake a parable, unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, there was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord

said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

At one time, Paul was desiring a certain thing from the Lord. He went in earnest prayer, but did not receive an answer. A second time he put in his petition, but still the Lord did not answer him; a third time he went in prayer, with earnest entreaties, until he did obtain an answer. This answer was satisfactory to him, although it was not exactly what he was expecting. He had been asking for the removal of certain things that he felt were a hindrance to him in his work, but the answer which came from the Lord was: "My grace is sufficient." Paul received such a blessing and consolation from this that it was perfectly satisfactory to him, insomuch that he went on his way rejoicing, knowing that whatever might come or go the Lord would give him an abundance of grace. After that he had some trying times, but the Lord always gave him sufficient grace to go through with victory.

Another thought regarding this prayer by Paul is that it did not seem to be the will of the Lord to deliver him from the persecution and suffering through which he was to pass for the furtherance of the gospel. Yet, the necessary help and blessings were given by the Lord, and he was perfectly satisfied with the answer. The thought we here wish to impress upon the mind is that sometimes the circumstances may be such that from a human standpoint to have certain things accomplished would seem best, still, God, in his great wisdom, can foresee that it would be better otherwise. However, it is our privilege to press the case until we receive a positive assurance, or an answer that the thing will or will not be accomplished;

and should it be contrary to what we were expecting, if there is the proper submission on our part, to have it this way, or that way, according to the will of the Lord, the answer received will be satisfactory; and we can rely upon his word, which says, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

Jesus at one time said, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." Luke 11:5-8.

There is probably not a more striking instance of importunity given in the Bible than that of Abraham when he learned that the City of Sodom was to be destroyed. He plead for the city, in case there might be a certain number of righteous people found therein.

"And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes." Abraham was not yet satisfied. He feared that in that great wicked city there might not be fifty righteous, and again he made entreaty unto the Lord, and said, "Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I

will not destroy it." Fearing that the number mentioned might yet be too great, Abraham again ventured to implore the Lord for mercy in behalf of the people of that city, and said, "Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake." Once more Abraham presented his petition, and said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there." The thought of the destruction of that city and the people therein so weighed upon the mind of Abraham that still again he pressed his supplication, and said, "Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall twenty be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake."

Abraham had asked so often that he felt almost ashamed to come again, but he thought he would now make his last appeal, and then leave the results with the Lord. He said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten should be found there." And the Lord, touched by his earnestness and importunity, said "I will not destroy it for ten's sake." Abraham and the Lord then ceased their communication regarding the matter, and went their way, but alas there could not be found ten righteous people in the city; but the Lord sent two angels to deliver Lot and his family, telling them to escape for their lives, and the city was destroyed.

If the unjust judge could be moved to action by the oft coming of the widow, insomuch that he granted her request; if Paul in his third prayer received an answer that was satisfactory; and the friend at the midnight hour importuned until he received the fulfillment of his petition, need we despair when our first implorations

seemingly are ignored? Never! So long as Abraham made a request, the Lord stayed by him and answered his petitions. Take courage, importune in like manner, and you will find favor in the sight of the Lord.

Heb 4:16

## XII

### How to Pray for Your Own Needs

ONE of the most necessary things in coming to the Lord in behalf of our own needs is to consider his promises, and to realize the truthfulness of the record which says, "The Scripture cannot be broken," (John 10: 35) and that "God is able to make all grace to abound towards you that ye always having allsufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in you." Ephesians 3: 20.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 16.

If grace be the most needful thing, there is promise of an abundant supply, but sometimes it must be sought with real boldness.

There may be times when wisdom is the principal need, that we may know what is most expedient and the proper course to pursue. To this end, we have the promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." James 1: 5, 6.

Sometimes people come to the Lord full of doubts and fears, and with but little determination or faith.

Their confidence in God in regard to his answering their prayers, is about as wavering as the waves of the sea, and James says "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

There are times when a person may not feel the spirit of prayer upon them. The enemy may try hard to defeat them and prevent them from coming to the Lord for having their needs supplied. For some reason, there may be a feeling that the Lord is far away, but there is a blessed promise, which is true and can be appropriated if one makes the proper effort. It says, "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." James 4:8, 10.

In coming to the Lord for help, we should come in humble submission to his will. First, know that what you desire is really one of your needs—something pleasing in the sight of the Lord for you to have—then you can take courage from the promise: "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." 1 John 3:22. While calling upon him, should it be revealed that there is something lacking on your part, or that there is something which you have been doing, that the Lord desires you to discontinue; or there is something you have not been doing, and which the Lord desires you to do, then and there should be made a decision to comply with his will from that time forth, or at the earliest opportunity. Such a submission to the will of God will have its weight with him, and cause him to look down with tender compassion upon his humble child.

It frequently happens that when people are calling upon God for personal needs, which must come through



the charity and liberality of others, they are made to realize the necessity of being charitable and liberal toward others; it may be in acts of kindness, gentleness, deeds of mercy, or a liberality of personal means in helping others in time of need, or in helping in various ways toward the furtherance of the gospel. Many good Christian people have never learned the blessedness in giving to the spread of the gospel, or in helping the poor and needy. They may often have given, when opportunity was presented, but have failed to make a practice of giving to such an extent that it required real self-denial, or of giving as unto the Lord in such a manner as to receive in return real blessings on account of these contributions and deeds of love.

Sometimes the circumstances are such and our needs of a nature that there is no one to whom we can appeal for help, except the Lord, and in order for him to grant our request, it becomes necessary for him to cause certain things out of the ordinary to take place. A few years ago, while in Michigan, I desired to take a train for the State of Indiana, where my wife was sick. I was intending to take an east-bound train at five o'clock in the evening, by which route I would be required to change cars at Kalamazoo, where, if on time, this train would arrive at the station fifteen minutes before the south-bound train was due on the other railroad. The stations were about half a mile apart, giving just sufficient time to make the change, when both trains were on time. The train which I was intending to take, however, came from Kalamazoo, and passed through our town, going west, at about four o'clock, when on time, and was to return at five; but on its way west, it was that evening fifteen minutes late. Unless it gained that fifteen minutes, I was likely to miss my train on the other line, and have

to remain in Kalamazoo over night. This would have been a great disappointment to me, as well as to others. I began praying that the Lord might speed the train onward, and cause it to make up the lost time. However, when five o'clock came, there was no train; fifteen minutes passed, and no train in sight, but finally it arrived, being three-quarters of an hour late; and only twenty-nine miles to Kalamazoo. Some of my friends urged me to wait and take a train over another route, but knowing that the connection by that route was not good, and feeling impressed that the Lord would help me through in the quickest possible time, I went aboard the train. I began praying the Lord, if possible, to yet gain the time, but found it still losing. I then prayed the Lord to hold the train on the other road. I had scarcely begun praying when it seemed that I had such liberty in communing with the Lord, and received such an assurance that the Lord had heard and answered my petition, that I turned my attention to other things and did not worry over the situation, although the train was constantly losing time.

When the train reached Kalamazoo, I hastened through the depot, and was met by a cabman. I asked him if the south-bound train on the other road had gone. He answered, "Yes, an hour ago. To what hotel shall I take you?" I asked again, "Were you at the station when it left? Do you know for sure?" He said, "No sir, I was not there, but it is an hour past time for its departure." I told him to take me to the train as soon as possible. He laughed at me. I said, "I will pay you for your trouble, but I want to make that train; make the greatest possible haste." He drove as fast as possible to the other depot, and as he opened the cab door, and I started for the depot, he said he would wait

and take me to a hotel. I said, "Never mind, I am going on this train." I hurried to the ticket office, and make inquiry as to how soon I could get a train for the south. The agent replied, "In forty minutes." I asked, "Is it the regular train?" "Yes sir," he replied. "It is late this evening. Just outside of the city a freight train is off the track, and the passenger has been delayed." Upon further inquiry, I learned that the passenger was delayed at about the time I had asked the Lord to hold the train on that road. Some may be inclined to think that this was just a happen-so, or an ordinary wreck, but I have never failed to give God all the glory for causing things to take place just as they did, in answer to prayer for the supplying of my present needs at that time.

XIII

Agreement in Prayer for One Another

It is a blessed privilege to be able to make our wants known unto the Lord while alone, but sometimes we feel the need of having others enter into agreement with us, and in accordance with the words of the blessed book, where Jesus says, "Again, I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

When Jesus was yet with the disciples, he would often pray for them, and no doubt in turn they offered petitions in his behalf. In the seventeenth chapter of St. John is a record of his supplications to the Father in behalf of his disciples, and not only for them, but his prayer was in our behalf also. He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." It is through the word of the apostles that we are made to believe on Jesus Christ, therefore, his prayer was for us also.

In the fifth chapter of James, it says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Ofttimes our prayers for each other are a source of consolation and help in time

of need. At the family altar, or in the public congregation, prayers may be offered up for each other of those present in such a way that they will draw inspiration therefrom, and although they may soon be separated, yet their agreement in prayer will be lasting.

A few years ago, just before some missionaries were to start for a foreign field, about two hundred children of God gathered together in special prayer in their behalf, that God might protect them from the dangers of the sea, from sickness and diseases, and make them useful in bringing souls into the kingdom. They were soon to sail on the ocean, and the time of their leaving had been published. Thousands of people were anxious concerning their safety and their missionary undertakings, and in every direction prayers were going up in their behalf. It was my privilege to be one of the number of that party of missionaries. As we reached midocean, a heavy gale was blowing, and soon there was a terrible storm, which lasted for two or three days. The ship, although a very large one, was tossed about on the sea, plowing its way through here and there, rolling from side to side, the waves seemingly rolling mountain high, so that at times they swept over the top of the ship. Furniture and dishes were crashing about the rooms and cupboards. At one time an outside door on the deck was burst open by a heavy wave, and the water came pouring down the stairway and along the hallways like a river. We were locked in and not allowed to go on deck, for fear of being swept overboard by the waves. In the midst of all this, one of the missionaries remarked, "This ship will not go down, because there are a thousand prayers hooked onto it." I replied, "Yes, ten thousand of them." We felt perfectly secure, knowing the promise of Matthew 18: 19; that if only two

were agreed, we were safe, and where thousands were praying surely we were doubly safe.

Although it was, indeed, a rough voyage, yet were we brought safely through, and not only this, but while in the foreign countries, in the midst of many dangers, surrounded by plague, sickness and diseases of many kinds, the Lord preserved us and enabled us to fulfill our calling. Amidst all these dangers of sea and land, we realized the benefits of praying for each other.

It is not enough to pray for ourselves, but when we make a practice of praying for each other, we increase in the graces of brotherly kindness, charity and faith. It also helps us to realize the blessedness of the words of Jesus, where he said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

LK 23<sup>34</sup>

## XIV

### Supplication in Behalf of Others

A BEAUTIFUL illustration of prayer for others is given in Luke 23: 34, after Jesus had been nailed to the cross. He had been scourged, spit upon, mocked, and it seemed that in every possible way his enemies tried to manifest their hatred toward him, and so despitefully treated him, yet in the midst of this, we hear his humble prayer:

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

If, under such circumstances, he could offer this kind of prayer for his enemies, what ought we to do when men revile and persecute us? It is a lesson to us to learn to love our enemies. We may not love their deeds, but we can pity them and have a love for their souls. If such a prayer can be offered for enemies, under such circumstances, surely it is an inspiration to us to pray for others in any circumstance of life. It should be an impetus to stir our hearts in behalf of those who stand in need of help, whether or not they realize their need. Some may have unsaved friends or relatives, who are very dear to them, and who are wayward and unconcerned regarding their souls; and still there may be others who are away from home and in need of help. For such, there is need of prayer by those who know its power.



We have, in the Word of God, many examples of how the people of God assembled to pray for each other, and upon departure solicited the prayers of the faithful in their behalf.

It is well to have a daily prayer-list, or memorandum, of not only the different persons and their needs, but also the different things that may be burdening your heart, or for which you are deeply concerned. The forming of a habit of daily writing down the subjects for prayer will not only be beneficial to others, but you will find yourself advancing in the graces of God, and realize a wonderful increase in faith, thus better qualifying you to make your life one of greater usefulness.

A story is told of a mother's prayers, as follows:

In the year 1861, in the month of February, a terrible storm raged along the coast of England. There were eighty-one vessels wrecked in one bay (Hartlepool). While the storm was at its height, the *Rising Sun*, a stout brig, struck on Longrear Rocks, a reef extending a mile from one side of the bay. She sank, leaving only her two top masts above the foaming waves.

The life-boats were away, rescuing wrecked crews. The only means of saving the men clinging to the swaying masts was the rocket apparatus. Before it could be adjusted, one mast fell. Just as the rocket bearing the life-line went booming out of the mortar the other mast toppled over. Sadly the rocket men began to draw in their line, when suddenly they felt that something was attached to it, and in a few minutes hauled out on the beach the apparently lifeless body of a sailor boy. Trained and tender hands worked over him and in a short time he became conscious.

With amazement, he gazed around on the crowd of kind and sympathizing friends. He looked up into the

weather-beaten face of an old fisherman near him, and asked:

"Where am I?"

"Thou art safe, my lad."

"Where is the Captain?"

"Drowned, my lad."

"The mate then?"

"He's drowned, too."

"The crew?"

"They are all lost, my lad; thou art the only one saved."

The boy stood overwhelmed for a few minutes; and then raised both hands, and cried in a loud voice, "My mother has been praying for me!" and then he dropped on his knees on the wet sand, and hid his sobbing face in his hands. Hundreds heard that day this tribute to a mother's love, and to God's faithfulness in listening to a mother's prayers.

## Petitions for Temporal Needs

**T**WO sisters were once very desirous of giving a certain sum of money to help in the gospel work. It was a time of need, and they wished to have a part in helping to supply that need. Having no money, and their circumstances being such that they were unable to earn money at that time, they retired to a room for prayer, and there purposed in their hearts that they would each give one dollar. As they prayed over the matter, and decided upon the amount to give, they felt very confident that in some way the Lord would supply the money. Several days later, one of these sisters received a letter from an aunt, whose home was at a distance of more than two thousand miles. In this letter, her aunt stated that she had some clothing which she very much desired to give her, but that as it was somewhat difficult to send it, she decided to sell the clothing and send the money instead. Just then someone came and desired to purchase it, giving therefor \$1.50, and two of her daughters added 25 cents each, making \$2.00, which was sent in the letter to the niece. Observing the dates given in the letter, the sister found that this had taken place the same day that she and the other sister had agreed in prayer. She had purposed in her heart to give \$1.00, but now she had \$2.00. As she was inquiring of the Lord as to what to do with the

other dollar, the Lord reminded her that the other sister was in need of a dollar to pay that which she had purposed, and this extra dollar was for her. It was gladly given to the other sister, and both of them greatly rejoiced that the Lord had so graciously supplied their need, and it was also an inspiration to their faith in trusting the Lord for their temporal needs.

When we come to the Lord, whether it be for spiritual or temporal help, we should expect him to give whatever we ask. First, there should be put forth an effort to know the will of God in the matter, then act accordingly. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" Luke 11:9-12. In other words, we might say, "If we ask a blessing, will he give a hard trial? or if we ask for money, will he give us greater poverty?" The questions asked in the foregoing scriptures were to impress upon our minds the fact that the Lord loves to give that which will do us good. In order to be blessed in store, as well as in experience, it is necessary for a person to be liberal at heart.

The apostle says, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

When the apostles were first sent out to preach the gospel, they were to go forth, trusting the Lord alone. Jesus said to them, "Provide neither gold, nor silver,

nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat." At a later time, when they had fully tested the promises of the Lord, and he had tested them and found them true, he said unto them, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." Luke 22: 35, 36.

They had learned to suffer privation for the benefit of others; had learned to place complete confidence in the promises of God, and now he could bestow blessings upon them by way of a sufficient amount of worldly goods for their use.

It may sometimes happen that one who is trusting God will meet with adversity. He may fall among thieves and robbers, or have all his property destroyed, and may for a great length of time suffer many privations; yet if he is true to God, he will bring him through it all with an abundance of grace. He, also, may possibly increase his worldly possessions to more than he at first had, as was the case with Job. We read in the Book of Job, how this man had an abundance of sheep and cattle and worldly possessions; and one messenger after another came informing him of the destruction of his property, until nearly all his possessions were either destroyed or taken from him. Besides this, he was smitten with boils from head to foot. His suffering was great, but he remained true to the Lord. After his property was taken from him, and Satan was going to and fro in the earth, "The Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like

him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity." After Job had suffered a great length of time, he said, "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." Job 31:6.

After Job had been thoroughly tested, God had mercy and compassion upon him, and the Word says "The Lord also accepted Job. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. . . . So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." Job 42:9-12.

## The Sinner's Prayer

**T**HE beautiful words recorded in John 3:16 should be a consolation to every sinner: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." It is through Jesus Christ that the sinner obtains pardon and is relieved of his burden of guilt and sin and fitted for the kingdom of heaven. There comes a time in the life of all persons when the Spirit of the Lord speaks to them, convicting of sin, and endeavoring to draw them away from the ways of wickedness. Furthermore, he has given encouraging promises which will reach the case of every one.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost—those who are lost in sin. When one is awakened to his condition, and comes to the Lord with a humble heart, a long prayer is not necessarily required in order to be saved. The publican, who felt the weight of his sins, in much humility of heart, prayed:

"God, be merciful to me a sinner."



Jesus said, "I tell you this man went down to his house justified."

It sometimes happens that people put off salvation until the last hour of their lives. It is better late than never, but too many are unable to seek the Lord at that hour. Many are hurled into eternity without a moment's warning; others find that at that time their hearts are hardened and the Spirit of the Lord has taken his departure, but even in the hour of death, the Lord has shown his great mercy to those who called upon him. It is recorded that the thieves upon the cross railed out upon him, but when one of them realized that Jesus was really the Son of God, even though he had spent his life in wickedness and sin, he yielded to the wooings of the Spirit, and reproved the other thief for mocking Jesus. He acknowledged that both of them justly merited punishment. Then he said to Jesus,

"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

The answer from Jesus was "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

A few years ago, some ministers were holding a series of meetings, the Spirit of the Lord was convicting people of their sins, and many were yielding and turning from their sinful ways. The minister plead with the people to turn to the Lord, and one man, who had enjoyed the blessings of salvation, but had again turned into sin, said that he would love to be a Christian but had sinned away his day of grace. He said that he had gone into sin until his heart was hardened. He was urged to come forward and let the ministers pray for him, and finally kneeled at the altar of prayer, but still insisted that his heart was so hard that he could have no confidence that God would deliver him. The brethren felt that he had

not sinned away his day of grace, and told him that if he could not place himself in the hands of God to place himself in the hands of the ministry, as best he could, and let them pray for him, trusting them to take his case to the throne of grace. After some solicitation on the part of the ministry, he decided to do so. The earnest prayers of the ministers ascended to the throne of grace in his behalf, and soon he began to feel the influence and melting power of the Spirit of God; and it was not long, as he thus yielded himself, until he realized that there was hope for him. As he began to call upon God, and acknowledge his sins, and decided, by the grace of God, to forever forsake them, he was soon made to realize the pardoning power and grace of the Almighty in his soul. He arose shouting the praises of God.

There are today many people whom the enemy has made to feel that their day of grace is past, and that there is no more hope—that they have sinned against the Holy Spirit, when it is only a trick of the enemy to keep them out of the kingdom.

I was once visiting the prisoners in a State Penitentiary. We had arranged on Sunday morning for a special meeting of those who were seeking special help from the Lord. About a dozen, who had been hardened criminals, some even murderers, were present and desired to seek help from God. I read, for part of a Scripture lesson, Matthew 6:14, 15. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." After commenting upon this text for some little time, one, who had been a murderer, arose and said that he had been seeking God for a long time, and even claimed to be saved; but never had been satisfied, and it was not until

that morning that he knew what stood in his way. Through the reading of the Word, the Lord made known to him that it was because of hardness he held in his heart against others whom he felt had wronged him and whom he felt he could not forgive. Then and there he decided to meet the conditions of the Word of God, forgive his enemies, and accept Jesus as his complete Saviour from all sin.

While traveling with a minister in the South, a few years ago, we came to a place in Mississippi, where a series of meetings were being held. This was considered a very wicked community. We earnestly prayed for the salvation of souls, and conviction rested upon the people. It seemed that the more the power of God was manifest in conviction, the more the enemy of souls tried to work in opposition to it. One night, just as services were about to begin, someone informed us that a mob of ruffians were on their way to break up the meeting. It then being time for prayer, we informed the congregation of the condition of affairs, asking the brethren to pray for protection and deliverance from the power of the enemy. We had a glorious meeting. The next day we learned that a number of those wicked young men, after spending some time in drinking liquor, had started for the place of meeting, and when within a few rods of the place, came to a small creek or stream, which was frozen over, it being midwinter. The ice was smooth and slick. They tried for a long while to cross, but could not do so, as on account of their intoxicated condition, they would fall on the ice. At times they would almost reach the other side, but seemingly could not quite make it, so finally abandoned their purpose of breaking up the meeting.

The next night the house was crowded, and the

members of the mob were present. The Spirit of the Lord accompanied the preaching of the Word, and great conviction rested upon the people. When opportunity was given for those who desired to seek the Lord to come forward, more than thirty persons speedily made their way to the front and began mightily calling upon the Lord. Soon the leader of the mob was there upon his knees, pleading for mercy, and one after another of his companions followed his example. After a short time, the leader rose, weeping, and confessed publicly concerning his sins and their former intentions of breaking up the meeting, also, stating that he realized it to be the power of God which kept them from crossing the creek the night before. He cried out, "I am the worst man in this whole country," then fell upon his knees, calling earnestly upon God for mercy. In a few minutes he arose, praising God for deliverance and was happy in the Saviour's love. He then besought his companions to seek peace to their souls. Nearly two years later, this man was taken sick and died, and his father informed me that he passed away rejoicing in the Lord.

There is hope for anyone who will seek the Lord while he may be found.

All sinners should show reverence, not only to God, but to his people. If for no other reason than a manifestation of gentlemanly principles, and real manliness, they should show their respect where occasion and necessity demands. If in public service, where people are accustomed to bowing in prayer, they should at least bow their heads in reverence; or if all the congregation kneel in prayer, they should show respect both to God and the people with whom they are associating by kneeling with them, also acting in like manner at the family altar. Simply because a person is not saved should not

prevent him from showing his respect by bowing with the family in the family-circle in morning or evening prayers.

Some have asked if it would be proper for a sinner to return thanks at the table. Yes, and especially if there are no Christians to ask a blessing, and he feels so disposed, it certainly would be right and proper for him to render thanks to God for his food. This can be done without any indication of hypocrisy. When a sinner shows respect to God and to his people in every possible way, it helps him to have a tender heart, and when he begins to seek God, the Lord will honor him and enable him to pray and exercise faith for deliverance from his sins. He will then realize the trueness of the Word, which says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Upon the Day of Pentecost, when Peter was preaching to those wicked men who crucified the Son of God, and told them of their sins and of the way of deliverance, they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." There was mercy for every one of them, notwithstanding their former wickedness.

Many have met a sad fate through procrastination. A minister once told me that he was called upon to preach the funeral of a young man about eighteen years of age, this man having lived a reckless life until he neared the hour of his death. Many times he had spurned the mercies of God and turned away from the wooings of

the Spirit of the Lord, when the gospel had been preached and he felt the pleadings of the Holy Spirit for the salvation of his soul. He chose a life of sin and revelry and turned a deaf ear, as it were, to everything that would turn him from his wicked career. Finally, when stricken down with disease, and he felt the messenger of death near, he began to realize keenly his critical condition. His friends were anxious for him, and praying with him thought from his expressions that he had accepted the Lord as his Saviour. He seemed to pass away in death, but after a while revived and calling to his father, who was a godly man, said "I am lost; I am lost, eternally lost. I have come back to tell you of my lost condition, because of my life of revelry and sin." In this condition he passed into eternity, without a hope, to meet his doom in the regions of the lost.

While a series of meetings were being held in a mining region, among those who sought the Lord was a miner, who was so wrought upon by the Spirit of God that he began praying and pleading for salvation. A number of the members of the congregation remained with him until a late hour, and then left him, but he refused to go home without the needed help, saying "I feel it must be settled tonight." The minister remained with him, and finally urged him to go home and come again the next night. The man said, "Some way, I feel it must be settled tonight." About three o'clock in the morning, while earnestly praying and pleading for his salvation, he broke through to victory and went home with a heart filled with praises.

In the morning he bade his wife and children farewell, as usual, and went to his work. It was a short time later that the arch of rock above him caved and fell upon him, crushing his body. As his fellow-workmen rushed

to his rescue, they found him still alive, and among his last words were "Oh, I am so glad I settled it last night!" Truly he was fortunate to have continued in prayer until the victory was won.



2 Chr 33 12 13

## XVII

### The Petition of the Outcast

**N**O one cares for me, and nobody loves me," is a common expression of the one who is an outcast, being forsaken by friends and society. Such persons feel that they are forsaken by both God and man, and their feelings can scarcely be described. In many cases there seems to be nothing for which to live, while death means only to step into deeper darkness and eternal despair.

King Manasseh turned aside from the way of righteousness and did evil in the sight of the Lord. His wickedness was of the deepest dye. The Lord warned him and the people, but they would not harken.

For a time the Lord permitted their enemies to prevail over them. Manasseh was bound with fetters and carried into captivity. While in exile, or banished from his kingdom, suffering pain and humiliation, he became awakened to his condition. He then began to humble his heart in prayer. The Lord heard his petition and answered.

"And now when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Ma-

nasseh knew that the Lord he was God." 2 Chronicles 33: 12-13.

Another one, who had the experience of being an outcast, was Hagar, who fled from the face of her mistress, and the Lord sent an angel after her. It was recorded that "the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way of Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress, Sarai. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands."

After her child was born, she again became an outcast and wandered away into the wilderness, with only the portion of a bond servant, which was some bread and a bottle of water. Soon "the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt."

These instances should be an encouragement to those who are friendless, penniless, and to whom the future

seems dark and dreary. It was because of their prayer, penitent plea, or anguish of soul that the Lord was construed to lend a helping hand in time of great distress.

Another very striking illustration of the mercy of God is shown in the instance of the prodigal son. (Luke 15: 11-24.) Jesus said, "I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke 10: 10.

It often happens that those in such a deplorable condition as to have become outcasts are so desperately discouraged as to believe that they are forsaken by God and man, sometimes even doubting the existence of God, but many in such a condition have ventured to pray, "Oh, God, if there be a God." Their state of wretchedness caused them to think there could scarcely be a God of mercy. However, there is hope for such, if they come in humility of heart, and penitence, no matter how great their desperation and despair. There is a way by which they may find favor in the sight of God, and that is through earnest, humble prayer.

1P 4 12 13

## XVIII

### How the Discouraged Can Get Help

**W**ITH many people, discouragements become chronic. Under adverse circumstances they give way to bad feelings, until the dark side can be seen in almost every undertaking. Misery and woe follow their pathway, and life becomes a constant burden, not of necessity, but because the one who lives such a life makes choice of it. The enemy of souls seeks to lead the discouraged into the way of confusion and desperation.

I once knew a man who yielded to discouragements until he reached the whirlpool of confusion. He had been in the service of the Lord for several years, and had been very useful in helping others; but after yielding to discouragement, and becoming confused regarding his spiritual life, he felt he was unable to keep victory in his soul. For many months he went along in this condition, often praying and consecrating his life anew, and having others pray for him again and again, and claiming the victory, only to again sink deeper in the mire, as it were. It seemed that the spirit of confusion had such power over him that he felt unable to retain a victory. He finally had to learn to take a stand against the spirit of confusion and against his feelings, and believe the Word of God to be true. He had to settle it in his heart, with a real determination to obey God, whatever the cost,

regardless of feeling or the opposing circumstances, that he would meet the conditions of the Word of God and that he would stand upon his promises. He further had to decide that would resist the devil and trust God for the needed help. Many times he had had prayer, by those who could pray the prayer of faith, and everything would seem clear before him, but yet to drop into discouragement had become a chronic thing with him, and it took a desperate effort for him to get out of that condition.

At one time, after having had the help of several brethren, who united in earnest prayer in his behalf, and instructed him just how to believe, God so witnessed to them and even caused him to feel his power and presence. The brethren had done everything they could possibly do, and God had so marvelously witnessed to their souls, by manifestation of his power and spirit, that they, with one accord, declared the work done. He could not find an excuse for not taking his stand, and even believed that God had granted the desired help, but said, "Now, brethren, I believe that if you would just do that over again, the same as you did before, I could believe." The brethren then said to him: "You have confidence that your wife is a good cook, have you not?" He replied, "She is a good cook." The brethren said, "Now, suppose you come home hungry and ask your wife to prepare something for you to eat. Soon she has a well-cooked meal, which she sets before you, and asks you to eat. You look at the food, and say, 'Well, wife, I know you are a good cook; I believe you cooked this food all right, but I think that if you will cook it all over again I can eat it.'" The confused brother saw the point, and said, "Must it come to this?" The brethren said it must come just that way, and that he was at that place from a spiritual standpoint; that it would be just as ridiculous for them

to do their work all over again, after the Lord had so witnessed to their faith, as for his wife to cook the food again, after she had once prepared it. It was then that he laid hold upon the promises of God, realizing how simple it was to believe God and to take him at his word. He gained the victory, the confusing, discouraging spirit was rebuked, and he forever took a stand against all such manifestations. He has since, for years, lived a victorious life, and he is able to instruct others and help them out of similar troubles and conditions.

A good way to keep victory over discouragements is to always look at the bright side of things. Instead of going about with a long face, have a smile for every one around you. In making petitions to the Lord, instead of forever asking and never believing, begin to count the promises of God as true, and appropriate them as your own. Remember that all have their trials.

The apostle says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4: 12, 13.

Again he says, "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter 1: 6-8.

There are times when, for our good, it may be necessary for us to have a burden, or a season of heaviness,

through manifold temptations, but at such times, we should remember the words of the apostle: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28.

Another thing that should be remembered is that: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Sometimes one is tempted to believe the trial to be greater than that of any one else, but such a person should read and re-read the scripture just quoted, and take note of the statement that the present trial is nothing more than is common to anyone, and that "God is faithful;" that he will not permit us "to be tempted above that we are able," and with the temptation he will "make a way to escape," that is, he will prepare a way for us to be an overcomer, "that ye may be able to bear it." He does not here promise to remove the cause of your trial, but he can lift you above it in spirit, and make you to abound in the riches of the glory of God, with such a victory that you can feel and realize the blessedness of the way of peace; and there will be a real inspiration in your soul, which causes you to rise above the trials of life. That which was a source of temptation and trial will be made a stepping-stone of faith to higher planes of peace and joy.

It frequently happens with some that their thoughts go uncontrolled, and thus their minds, in a sense, become darkened and confused. By watchfulness and earnest prayer, this may be averted, but sometimes in going to prayer some have been troubled with wandering thoughts and find it difficult to concentrate their minds upon the



Lord. There are various reasons for such conditions. At times it may be a direct imposition of the enemy to prevent a prayer of faith. At such times the evil one needs to be rebuked and resisted, and one should return to the Lord with real earnestness. At other times it may happen on account of over-taxation or sluggishness of mind or because of a lack of activity. In the latter case, proper exercise in the open air will be beneficial, aside from the help one may receive directly from the Lord. Again, these things come from permitting the mind to dwell upon things that are not wholesome for the soul. For one to continue to entertain lines of thought which are harmful, will, to that extent, corrupt the mind and cause a habit to be formed, from which it is difficult to break away.

A good illustration regarding what should be the subject of our thoughts is given in Philippians 4:7, 8: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." From this, we would conclude that it would not be wise to let the mind dwell upon those things which are not helpful. There are things that are true that would not be beneficial for us to think about continually. For instance, some dreadful calamity has taken place; a murder or some vile deeds have been committed. There is no question about the fact that these things have taken place; no harm may come from knowing of them, but to continue to let the mind dwell upon such things will add neither virtue nor praise. Evil thoughts may come to the mind, but it is

our place to resist them. There are times, even when a person is not discouraged, that he feels a special burden upon his soul over some weighty matters, either spiritual or temporal, or it may be for the salvation of other souls. The burden may be so great that the one who is so wrought upon by the spirit of God may not be able to give expression in words, while in prayer; but the Lord is able to give help even when words cannot be uttered, as we read in Romans 8:26: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Job 5:17-19

## XIX

### How to Obtain Help in Time of Trouble

**I**T was when Job was put to the utmost test, in almost every possible way, that he realized that God was his helper; even in the darkest hour of his trial, and while in his sore affliction, and after having suffered the loss of all his worldly possessions, the instruction and counsel given him was "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." Job 5:17-19.

Sometimes Job felt that he was almost forsaken by God and man, and was sorely tempted and tried and tested, but his trueness in the end brought great satisfaction to the soul, and the blessings of the Lord were upon him in a temporal way, and also in increasing his faith and confidence in God.

In time of trouble, one should flee to the Lord in prayer. Then is the time that a person needs to commune with one who knows all about their sorrows and cares, who understands the source of their trials and knows just how to render the needed help.

The Psalmist said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalms 46: 1.

We should learn at all times to follow the advice of the apostle, wherein he says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." 1 Peter 5:6, 7.

A sure way to prolong troubles is to worry over things of the past, present, or future. It does no one any good to worry over a thing before it happens, and it will not help matters in the least to worry after it has happened. Many people are either living in the past or the future so far as enjoyment is concerned, and have not learned the blessedness of a present experience of freedom of mind, soul and body—have not learned to cast their cares and anxieties on the Lord and permit him to take away their burdens.

It is not good policy to take your troubles to bed, as they do not make a congenial bed-fellow. Upon retiring at night, everything should be committed into the hands of the Lord and then lie down in peace to rest and sleep.

Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer."

In the fifth chapter of Romans, the apostle tells how to receive a benefit in time of trial and testing. After making mention of the experience of salvation, through faith, he says, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Romans 5:3-5.

He does not say that we are to worry in time of trial

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and tribulation, nor that we are to feel downcast, but to "glory in tribulations." "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 16.

Mal 310

## XX

### Opening the Windows of Heaven

**W**HEN the Jews had wandered away from the Lord and failed to do that which was required of them, in bringing their tithes and offerings for the service of the Lord, they were admonished through the prophet Malachi, who said to them, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10.

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Malachi 4:2.

When Jesus Christ came preaching the gospel, those who believed were made free from the bondage of sin and were delivered from the power of the devil. The promise was given of the Holy Spirit, the abiding comforter, and upon the day of Pentecost, as the disciples were earnestly praying and waiting and believing. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

. . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:2-4. Surely the windows of heaven were open to them, and the blessings of God were showered down upon their souls, and it is said of them that "they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people."

Thousands of people believed, and became followers of Jesus, and consecrated their worldly possessions to the service of the Lord. A mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit continued to rest upon these liberal hearted people, nor did the blessings of salvation and the manifestation of his joy and power stop with the believers at Pentecost. Throughout the New Testament, are many promises of joy and happiness to those who obey the Word of the Lord. There are recorded instances of those who actually received such blessings, and obtained an experience whereby they could rejoice in the grace and glory of God. The apostle, in writing to the Roman brethren, said, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:13.

It is evident that many Christians are not enjoying their full privileges in the gospel. One of the principal hindrances is not only a lack of energy and enthusiasm, but a lack of belief for the needed help and manifestation of the power of God. It was when the apostles were commanded not to speak any more in the name of Jesus that they were made to flee to the Lord in prayer, and there, in great earnestness, the petitions ascended to the throne as the petition of one man. They could have quietly complied with the request of their enemies, and have placed their light under a bushel, as it were, in order



to avoid further opposition and persecutions, but on the other hand, they prayed for boldness, that they might speak the Word of the Lord, and that the Lord might enable them to work signs and wonders. This was the very thing that caused them to get into trouble—the manifestation of the power of God in and through them. When they had thus prayed, it is said that the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they spake the Word of God with boldness. It was then that the mighty manifestation of the power of God followed.

Their prayer was a prayer of faith: much was at stake. They were determined to be obedient unto the Lord regardless of opposition; regardless of persecutions, and when they prayed for boldness, they expected to act accordingly. They did not mean to wait until some wonderful thing should take place, in order that they might have some occasion to go forward and do their duty. Considering matters from a reasonable standpoint, and realizing that God now is as he was in those days, as we read in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever," and also realizing that men are of like passions now as they were in those days, it is only reasonable to believe that the same earnestness, the same consecration and exercising of faith will now bring about similar results. It may not be exactly the same manifestation, but the power of God will be manifest in a way that is satisfactory to those who meet the full conditions of the Word of God and press the battle on to victory.

Paul was not among the number that prayed for boldness, but instead soon after that time we read that he was very bold in persecuting the children of God, even casting them in prison and consenting to their death; but when he turned from his sins and wickedness, God mani-

fested his power with him in various ways, and not only with him but with those under his teaching, and under the preaching of the gospel by other ministers at that time.

It is when the whole word of God is preached, or believed and practiced, that the windows of heaven are opened unto the people of God. There are many who occasionally receive blessings, and whose faith is honored by God, but they are living so far below the standard of truth that their showers of blessings are not very frequent.

When the death sentence was upon Peter, while he was in prison, bound in chains, he was living before the Lord in such a manner that he could quietly commit everything unto the Lord and go to sleep. It was while in that condition that the Lord sent his angel and delivered him.

It was when Paul and Silas had their feet in stocks in prison, and had been beaten with many stripes, until their blood was shed for the sake of the gospel, that even through it all they were praising God at the midnight hour, when the Lord sent an earthquake and opened the prison doors, and soon the prisoners were set free; the jailer and his family saved, and their household made happy in the love of God.

Would you have the windows of heaven opened to your soul, where the blessings can be showered down upon you? Then let the consecration not only be complete, but see to it that you are energetic and active in doing what God has for you to do in his service. The man or woman who has nothing to give for the furtherance of the gospel, in accordance with the means that God has placed in their hands, or enabled them to possess, has failed to realize the riches of the blessings that come

from that source of consecration. Ofttimes people plead poverty, forgetting the widow's mite, and the commendations of Jesus for her liberality. There are times when people are really unable to give of their temporal means, because they have nothing to give, but there are deeds of charity that can be performed, there are words of kindness that can be spoken, there are burdened hearts that need to be cheered, the sorrowful to be consoled, and words of comfort and consolation to those who are tried and discouraged. There are times, when even a smile from one who is filled with the grace of God, will be a source of encouragement to those in need of help. There are many ways by which a person may be useful, even though penniless, yet abounding in the grace of God.

The apostle said, "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Colossians 3:14-17.

James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." There should be a determination to do the will of God at the cost of all things. Such a fixed decision will enable one to go through the thickest of the fight and surmount the greatest difficulties in life.

The glory of the Lord will rest upon those who are faithful and push the battle through to victory. They may ofttimes pass through deep waters of trial, have very heavy burdens of life to bear, and at times it may

seem that the Lord has hidden his face from them, but their trueness in such times will enable them to realize the truthfulness of the promises of the Lord, and will open the windows of heaven to shower blessings upon their souls.

45-47  
Jk 20

## XXI

### Long and Short Prayers

**T**HE length of the prayers offered is no criterion by which one may estimate our power with God, or know the extent of our spirituality. The motive and fervency of the heart is that which the Lord considers. A few words may sometimes be as effectual as ten thousand words.

The Pharisees loved to stand on the street corners and pray long prayers, in order to be seen of men, but their prayers availed nothing. Jesus not only gave them to understand that their prayers did not reach the throne of grace, but warned the people against them. "Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widow's houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation." Luke 20: 45-47.

While Paul was on his way to Damascus to persecute the children of God, a voice from heaven spoke to him. As wicked as he was at that time, he at once recognized it as being the voice of God. "And he said, Who art thou, Lord?" His entreaty was direct, pointed, and with all seriousness. The answer came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

The poor publican, who was so humiliated at heart, because of his sins, and feeling the weight of his guilt, said,

“Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner.”

There words came from the very depths of his soul, and Jesus said that he “went down to his house justified.”

There are some people who are unable to express themselves fluently or freely in prayer, but the Lord hears and takes note of their earnest petition, though it be in few words.

There are times when a short prayer by anyone may suffice, while at other times it becomes necessary to prolong the petition and present many things before the Lord, for his help, and in obtaining his favor and blessings, according to the petition desired.

Jesus would, at times, arise before the break of day, or very early in the morning, and go to some solitary place for prayer. It was for the purpose of unburdening his heart to the Father, for his needs and the needs of the people. Sometimes he would linger all night in prayer. Generally soon after such prolonged prayers, there was some remarkable occurrence, or a weighty matter considered, or a mighty manifestation of his power.

The Christian should learn to have the necessary self-control, and govern himself according to circumstances. Ofttimes at public services an extremely lengthy prayer would be entirely out of order, while at other times a prayer of reasonable length, when inspired by the Spirit of the Lord, may be what is needed, while again a short prayer would be more appropriate.

In an assembly, where there has been made a special request for prayer for some particular thing, or for some certain person, it would not be wisdom to begin praying

for the heathen in foreign lands, nor for the missionaries and their needs, or the many things and places in home and foreign lands. Then and there is not the place for your prayers to be extended all around the world, but they should be centered upon the one special thing for which prayer has been requested. It is then that others present can exercise definite, united faith with the one who is praying, and God will send the answer accordingly.

At the time of general prayer, the scope of territory may be broadened, and petitions ascend for various things, according to the place and circumstances. One of the things to be remembered, in order to make prayer effective, is to ask for just what is desired, as Jesus said, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24.



Exk 20:31

## XXII

### To Those Who Pray and Receive No Answer

**T**HERE are people who are religiously inclined, and claim to be Christians, or followers of the Lord, and yet are so far from him in spirit and in devotion that he neither listens to nor answers their prayers.

At various times the children of Israel strayed away from God, and worshiped idols and did many other things that were contrary to the will of God, yet they claimed to be people of the true God. In times of trouble they would turn to him for help, but did not give up their idol worship and evil practices. For this reason God paid no attention to their prayers, because of a lack of true repentance. He spoke to his prophet, Ezekiel, at one time, and said, "Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Are ye come to enquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you. For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you." Ezekiel 20:3 and 31.

Another prophet said, "They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not

find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them." Hosea 5:6.

It was because of their continuing in sin and their unwillingness to give up their sins, even when they were seeking the Lord, that caused him to hide his face from them and refuse to hear them. The Lord sent his prophet, Isaiah, to them, telling them why the Lord had hid his face and how to escape from the destruction that was upon them. He said, "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 1:15-20.

No matter how religious people may be, or how great their profession, if they insist in going recklessly on in sin, God will not hear and answer their prayers while they continue in this condition.

XXIII

## Why Some Prayers Are Not Answered

**T**HE Jews, who did not accept Christ, were blinded to the fact that he was the Christ. Their hearts became hardened, and although they prayed to God, yet their prayers availed nothing.

The Scribes and Pharisees could pray long prayers, and make great demonstrations before the public, but their prayers availed nothing. Jesus told them that they were very particular about the outward performance of the washing of hands, and such like, but neglected the weightier matters pertaining to the salvation of the soul, and their prayers, therefore, were not heard.

There are people who have once been converted, and upon whom God has bestowed his blessings in many ways, but who have since failed to walk in the light of his Word, thus causing their hearts to be far from God, so that they are no longer able to have sweet communion with him, as Jesus says: "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." John 12:35.

Then there are those who pray from a selfish motive. They ask, but as James says: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." James 4:3.

The proud in heart fail to receive the needed help from the Lord. We read "But he giveth more grace. Where-

fore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4:6.

Some fail to resist the devil, and are defeated while at prayer. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." James 4:7, 8.

Many people pray, and apparently open the door of their hearts to the Lord, but close the door before the answer comes; while others pray and do not expect an answer—in fact, would be very much surprised should the Lord answer their prayer.

There is an inclination on the part of some who have prayed, to believe that the Lord does not commune with people in prayer, as he did in the early days of Christianity, but such is a mistaken idea. The difficulty is not with the Lord, but with the one who does the praying.

That which was written in the last chapter of James, in regard to the prayer of Elias, was given for our benefit. It says that he was a man of like passions as we are, and he prayed. Then there is given a record of the result of his prayer. The lesson in this for us is that if he was a man of like passions, or make-up, as we are, and could pray the prayer of faith and receive an answer from God, it is evident that with the same earnestness and determination before God, it is possible for us to have our prayers answered, according to our needs.

The promises are yea and amen, in Christ Jesus, and it is recorded that the "scriptures cannot be broken."

James 1:5-7

## XXIV

### How to Get an Answer

**I**N the first chapter of James, the apostle gives instruction as to how prayer should be offered for wisdom. He says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." James 1:5-7.

There must be perfect submission to the will of God, and whether the answer is immediately forthcoming, or importunity is required, be determined but so submissive that there be no hindrance to receiving the answer that is according to his will.

The leper came in much humility of heart, and said:

"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

Matthew 8:2.

He had left it completely to the will of God, and the answer was forthcoming:

"I will; be thou clean."

Another beautiful illustration of the compassion of Jesus in regard to an earnest petition was in the case of the centurion. "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of

the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. . . . And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

A wonderful lesson is to be learned from this centurion. He manifested implicit confidence in the ability, power and willingness of Jesus to fulfill the desire of his heart. In order to convince Jesus of his faith in him, he referred to his own authority over the men under his jurisdiction, and how obedient they were to his commands. They were his servants and did not wait to question his authority, nor to know why his commands were given, but always obeyed him in whatsoever he requested of them. Now, the centurion offered to acknowledge Jesus in full authority, possessing the necessary power of execution, and he himself acted the part of an obedient servant, and said to Jesus, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Such implicit confidence, such simple faith and readiness to do the will of God, anxiously awaiting an opportunity for action or submission to whatever may be his will, is sure to bring an answer in some way that will be satisfactory to the one who makes the petition.

The Psalmist said, "I cried unto God with my voice,

even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord." Psalms 77: 1.

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalms 84: 11.

After a wonderful manifestation of the power of God in the withering of the fig tree, when the disciples called the attention of Jesus to it, his answer was: "Have faith in God." He then set forth to them the unbounded possibilities of faith and their privileges through its exercise. "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11: 12-24.

There are times when a person's faith may be severely tested. Then is the time to stand true to God and await the results. The Word says: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Hebrews 10: 35, 36.

Stand firm, like Abraham of old, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being



fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Romans 4: 18-24.

This then, having been written for our benefit, we should not fail to profit by the faithfulness of Abraham, and like this patriarch of old, let us not stagger at the promises of God. It is then that we can realize and enjoy our privileges in the Lord more abundantly, and learn to rely upon him in every time of need.

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."  
1 John 5: 14, 15.

fn 15-1-3

## XXV

### The Prayer of the Patriarchs

**A**MONG those of the patriarchs upon whom the blessings of the Lord seemed to specially rest were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their communion with the Lord is not often recorded in the form of a petition of prayer in the manner in which some of the prophets, kings and apostles plead with the Lord in later years. However, it is written that they prayed, but generally their prayer was a communion in which the Lord spoke directly to them in various ways. While it is evident that these patriarchs often humbled themselves in earnest prayer before the Lord, as did men of God in later years, yet the records given are mostly of direct communion by way of conversation between them and the Lord.

Abraham is designated as being the "Father of the faithful." One of his short prayers is given in Genesis 15: 1-3, where he asks the Lord for a child. In answer to that prayer, the Lord promised to give him a son, and "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief." Romans 4: 20, 21.

After the fulfillment of this promise, and when his son Isaac had grown to be a lad, the truthfulness of Abraham was tested to the fullest extent when he was asked to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. He went about it with the intention of carrying out the directions of the Lord, and unwaver-

ing faith believed that even though Isaac should be slain the Lord would fulfill his promise in making him a great nation. God, seeing the faithfulness of Abraham, provided another sacrifice and spared the son.

Not only did Abraham pray for himself, but he prayed for others also, and God honored his faith in their behalf. "So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants." Genesis 20: 17.

The fervency of Abraham was manifest in his earnest importunity to the Lord in behalf of the people of Sodom. When he learned that the Lord intended to destroy the city, he made an earnest plea for the deliverance of that city from its awful destruction. (Genesis 18: 23-33.)

The Lord favorably answered every petition made by Abraham in his supplications for this city, and not being able to find a sufficient number to comply with the last request, the Lord delivered Lot and his family, and then destroyed the city.

At one time, when the messengers whom Jacob had sent to meet his brother, Esau, returned, their message greatly disturbed Jacob, as he believed Esau was coming to meet him in battle, so he resorted to prayer.

"And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand

of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”  
Genesis 32:9-12.

After Jacob had offered this petition unto the Lord, he prepared to meet Esau and make the best of the situation, but was unwilling to do so without receiving an assurance from the Lord of favor in his sight.

“And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed.

And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.”  
Genesis 32:24-29.

This is one of the great examples of importunity with the Lord. Jacob realized that his only help was to come from the Lord, and believed that great devastation and destruction was before him, except he receive the favor of God. It was for this reason that he besought him so earnestly and did not let this messenger of the Lord go until there was an evidence of the bestowal of favor in the sight of God.

These earnest petitions of the patriarchs, with their determined efforts to obtain the blessings of God, and have favor in his sight is an impetus to us to prevail in prayer; and their example in petitioning the Lord should stimulate us with a fervency that we may offer our peti-

tions with a determination not to be defeated by the enemy.

Many people today fail to enjoy the blessings of the Lord as they should, and fail in their privileges with the Lord, because of a lack of fervency and importunity such as attended the intercessions of the patriarchs.

E+3 11-15

## XXVI

### Moses and Aaron

**P**ERHAPS no one ever felt his weakness more take upon himself the responsibility of leadership than did Moses at the time the Lord called him in delivering the children of Israel out from under the bondage of Pharaoh. When the Lord presented this matter to Moses, the thought of taking such responsibilities seemed more than Moses was able to bear.

“And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever,

and this is my memorial unto all generations." Exodus 3: 11-15.

Poor Moses, with all the promises given, yet he did not feel competent for the place, and could not feel that the people would be willing to obey his commands. He said to the Lord, "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor harken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." Then the Lord manifested his power, in various ways, to Moses, and told him how he could convince the people that he the Lord had really called him to be their leader.

"And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."

This displeased the Lord, and yet he did, in a sense, comply with the petition of Moses, insomuch that he agreed to send Aaron along as spokesman, but said, "And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs."

As much as Moses felt his inability, God did not see fit to release him from the responsibilities to which he had called him. Even though Aaron went along to be spokesman, Moses was required to tell him what to say.

After the children of Israel had made their escape from Egypt, and while wandering in the wilderness, many times Moses and Aaron would fall upon their faces in earnest prayer before the Lord. Sometimes the people murmured against them and against God to such an extent that the Lord was about to destroy them from the face of the earth, when the prayers of Moses and Aaron would prevail in their favor.

At one time, when Moses was upon Mount Sinai, and had received the ten commandments, engraven on stone tablets, the people made and worshiped a golden calf, and brought upon themselves the displeasure of the Lord, inasmuch that they were about to be consumed.

"And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou warest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever." Exodus 32:11-13.

This earnest appeal of Moses was not passed by unheeded. The Lord had compassion upon the people, through this prayer of Moses, and did not destroy the people, as he had thought to do.

Moses often came in close proximity with the Lord. "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."



“And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.” Exodus 33:12-17.

At another time, after the spies had been sent over to view the lay of the land, upon their return, ten of them gave an evil report, and did not advise the people to undertake to go over into Canaan to possess the land at that time. The children of Israel then began to murmur against Moses and against Aaron, and it was then that Moses and Aaron were made to flee to the Lord in earnest prayer: “Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.”

When the two other spies gave a favorable report, the children of Israel were about to stone them with stones. This so displeased the Lord that he said, “I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.”

“And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.” Numbers 14: 13-19.

“And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word.” Numbers 14: 20.

Moses had accepted the call from the Lord, and had assumed the responsibilities which the Lord had laid upon him, and was, from that time, in a position where much depended upon his trueness to God. He manifested such a spirit of meekness at times that he has always been looked upon as the meek man of the Bible. He had many trials and testing times when his only help was in God. His example in prayer, and his pleadings with God in behalf of others should be an inspiration and encouragement to every Christian. His perfect confidence in the

Lord was frequently manifested, perhaps, not more vividly than at the Red Sea, when they were pursued by Pharaoh's army, and were facing the sea, which was impassable to all appearances at that time, yet in all confidence, "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Exodus 14: 13, 14.

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## XXVII

### The Promise to Joshua

**J**OSHUA was one of the twelve spies that were sent over into the land of Canaan to spy out the land and report as to the advisability of the children of Israel going over at once to take possession of it. Upon their return, ten of the spies gave an adverse report.

“And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.

But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.”  
Numbers 14:6-10.

For this faithfulness of Joshua, the blessings of the Lord rested upon him. He was a minister under Moses; and the Lord promised that he should be one of the number who should enter into the land of Canaan. Only

a short time before the death of Moses, Joshua was informed that the Lord had made choice of him to assume the leadership of the children of Israel, and take them over into the land of Canaan. Moses told the children of Israel that Joshua should be their leader in the land of Canaan and among the Canaanites, and said to him, "Be strong and of a good courage; fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

"And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed." Deuteronomy 31:7, 8.

No doubt, Joshua had had considerable experience in dealing with the people during the forty years which they remained in the wilderness, and these words from Moses were an encouragement to him.

"Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee

all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Joshua 1: 1-9.

(Time and again, in his instruction of Joshua, the Lord seemed to try to impress upon him the great necessity of being of a good courage. He knew that Joshua would have opportunities of exercising his faith, and that trials would be heaped upon him to such an extent that it would require the utmost courage to go through victoriously. However, with all the instruction given to Joshua, and the admonitions to be true to the Lord and courageous, there was a precious promise: "The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.")

XXVIII

Joshua in Trouble

THE blessings of the Lord rested upon Joshua according to the promises that had been given him, and when the proper time came, at the command of the Lord, Joshua led the children of Israel to the brink of Jordan. By his implicit faith and confidence in God, he was enabled to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord for a mighty manifestation of his power as with Moses at the Red Sea. He instructed the priests, who bore the ark of the covenant, to step into the waters, and at his command to go forward, the water then parted, and the hosts of Israel passed through on dry ground into the land of Canaan. They were now in their own promised land—in the land that was said to be a place which flowed with milk and honey. They were now in a country inhabited by their enemies, whom they were soon to meet, but the inhabitants of the land had heard of the mighty works of God through his servant Moses, and now as the waters had parted for Joshua and he led the hosts of Israel into their land, they quaked with fear.

No doubt, Joshua often went to the Lord in prayer and communion for the purpose of receiving the needed wisdom and help in time of need. They were soon to make the first attack upon the city of Jericho. The Lord had promised that if they were true to him he would fight their bat-

ties for them. By following the directions of the Lord, the City of Jericho was easily captured. Their instructions were to take nothing from the spoils of the city, but while the city was being destroyed, someone did take something from the spoils, which act greatly displeased the Lord.

Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, telling them to go up and view the country. Upon their return, they gave a favorable report, and told Joshua that they did not think it necessary for all the hosts of Israel to go up there to take the city, but that two or three thousand men would be sufficient. Having had such marvelous success at Jericho, they were confident that nothing but victory awaited them in the taking of the next city. About three thousand men were despatched for that purpose, but when they were about to make the attack they had to flee before the people of Ai. "And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water."

Now came the testing time for Joshua. He knew nothing about the smuggling of goods from the city of Jericho, and therefore did not know the cause of the defeat of his soldiers. Having had such positive promises from the Lord, Joshua could not understand why there should be such a marked change in affairs, and so sudden a defeat.

"And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads." Joshua 7:6.

It was then that he raised up his voice in prayer, and said, "Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the



hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" Joshua 7:7-9.

Joshua was almost at the point of discouragement. It is now readily to be seen why Moses and the Lord particularly charged Joshua to be strong and courageous.

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff." Joshua 7:10, 11.

The Lord not only heard Joshua's prayer, but he answered by telling him just what had happened, and left with Joshua the responsibility of finding out the one guilty of such a deed. Joshua prepared to make investigation. He told the children of Israel what had happened, and called them before him by tribes, families and households, until the guilty one was found. "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what hast thou done; hide it not from me.

And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in

the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." Joshua 7: 19-21.

Achan received the penalty of death, after which the favor of the Lord was with Israel, and Joshua was assured of success. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given unto thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land: and thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee in ambush for the city behind it." The city was taken with a great victory.

At another time, when Joshua was in a hot conflict with the Amorites, he called upon the Lord, and again exercised such confidence and boldness that "He said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon: and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel." Joshua 10: 12-14.

Among the lessons to be learned from the life of Joshua is his trueness to God, his confidence and boldness, and his determination to do the will of God and walk uprightly so as to find favor in his sight, in order that he might be able to commune with him in prayer, and prevail, obtaining help in time of need.

Ja 5-17

## XXIX

### How the Prophets Prayed

**T**HE true prophets of the Lord were men of prayer —men who relied upon God for their wisdom and understanding, who were faithful in prayer and communion with the One who is mighty to deliver.

That noted man of prayer, Elijah, the prophet, James sets forth as an example (James 5: 17), and gives us to understand that he was a man like the people of his day. Nevertheless, because of his earnest entreaties unto the Lord, he stands forth as a towering monument of faith among the faithful. Reference is made to him as being a righteous man, with the encouraging words to us that the "prayer of a righteous man availeth much." His prayer that it might not rain is not recorded, but there is a mere statement that he prayed such a prayer and that it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months. He prayed again, and soon the heavens were black with the approaching storm and the rain fell in torrents.

The experience of Elijah at the brook Cherith, the supplying of the widow with food from the handful of meal, the continual increase of oil in the cruse, and his experience with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, were manifestations of the power of God through his servant, which, no doubt, increased the confidence of Elijah towards God. In like manner, this should encour-

age the people of today to place greater confidence in the Lord, and to exercise greater faith.

In his lamentations before the Lord, Jeremiah, in bewailing the pitiful condition of the children of Israel, lifted up his voice unto the Lord:

“I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not. O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life. O Lord, Thou hast seen my wrong: judge thou my cause. Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me. Thou hast heard their reproach, O Lord, and all their imaginations against me; The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day. Behold their sitting down, and their rising up. I am their musick.” Lamentations 3: 55-63.

Jeremiah had known what it was to be cast into prison, to be compelled to stand in the mire in a dark dungeon; he knew what it was to suffer as a servant of the Lord and in behalf of his people, and the Lord considered his faithful servant and heard his plaintive plea.

When Nehemiah heard of the sad condition of the Jews, at Jerusalem, although he was several hundred miles distant, he was greatly concerned about the matter and went to the Lord in earnest prayer.

“And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou

mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept thy commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer."

There is a beautiful lesson to be learned from this petition of Nehemiah. He held a high position in the kingdom, and notwithstanding this, he was anxious to go to Jerusalem and aid his poor brethren, who were suffering, and there suffer with them, and bear the persecution heaped upon them by their enemies. Through this prayer, the Lord opened a way whereby his desires might be realized. In making his petition unto the Lord, it will be noted that he humbled himself, and acknowledged his wrong and the wrongs which had been committed

by the people, and then referred the Lord to his promises. He first met the conditions required in order to receive help and could then justly expect the desired help from the Lord.

In answering this prayer the Lord manifested his great compassion and love in fulfilling his promises to those who turned to him in obedience, even though they may have wandered far away from the paths of righteousness. It is a lack of obedience which so often hinders answers to prayer. Obedience begets confidence, and with the proper confidence, it is an easy matter to exercise faith, and the prayer of faith will result in bringing about the desire of the heart.

25718-29

## XXX

### The Kings

**A**MONG the prominent kings, whose prayers are recorded in the Bible, are David and Solomon. The Lord, at one time, gave David instructions concerning the building of the Temple, which he called the "House of the Lord." David offered up a prayer of thanksgiving:

"Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

Wherefore thou are great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou has confirmed to thyself thy

people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God.

And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer to thee.

And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever." 2 Samuel 7: 18-29.

After the death of David, his son, Solomon, sat upon the throne and ruled Israel. He carried out the plans of his father in the erection of the Temple; and when it was finished, he assembled the elders and the men of Israel at Jerusalem, for the dedication of the Temple, and they held a great feast in honor of its completion. It was here that Solomon offered one of the notable prayers of the Bible:

"And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:

And he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest



also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day: that thine eyes may be opened toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray before this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and

bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them; then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. . . .

And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways,

and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he may maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require; that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day." 1 Kings 8: 22-61.

This is one of the longest prayers recorded in the Bible, and was not passed by unheeded by the Lord.

"And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and will keep my statutes and my judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel." 1 Kings 9: 3-5.

Now we come to another king of Israel, who prayed a prayer under altogether different circumstances, and this is one of the short prayers of the Bible, yet the Lord heard and answered.

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayd unto

the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years. 2 Kings 20:1-6.

Here we notice that after Hezekiah prayed he wept. He told the Lord how he had walked uprightly before him, with a perfect heart. It is to be observed that the Lord not only paid particular attention to the prayer, but also to the tears of Hezekiah. His message, through the prophet, was "I have heard thy prayer; I have seen thy tears," and the promise was "I will heal thee."

This prayer of the king should be an incentive to us in time of trouble, sickness or adversity—in fact, in any critical time of our lives, to come to the Lord in real fervency of heart, knowing that what he did for Hezekiah he is able to do for us, and he who was touched with the earnestness of that prayer will also be touched with an equal fervency of our prayers.

2265

## XXXI

### The Faithfulness of Daniel

**T**HE Jewish captive who was held in bondage in Babylonia, was much blessed of the Lord, and because of his trueness to God, his faithfulness in his labors and concerning that which was entrusted in his care, he found favor in the sight of the king, and became a useful instrument in the hands of the Lord, being known as the prophet Daniel.

There were many very interesting and striking incidents in the life of Daniel, among the first of which, we have mentioned, is that of his refusal to partake of the king's meat and wine, preferring to follow the teachings of his fathers and to be true to God.

The Lord bestowed upon him knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and gave him an understanding in all visions and dreams.

The story of Daniel is one told so often that it may almost seem out of place to repeat it here, nevertheless there are such beautiful lessons to be learned that it is deemed necessary to call attention to some of the things concerning his faithfulness, as an inspiration to our faith and trueness to God.

When King Nebuchadnezzar became troubled over his dream, he called the magicians and wise men of the country and said to them, "I have dreamed a dream, and my

spirit was troubled to know the dream." They requested the king to tell them the dream, that they might tell him the interpretation, but he said it had gone from him and he could not tell them. He told them that unless they could make known unto him the dream and the interpretation thereof he would have them cut into pieces. The Chaldeans declared there was not a man upon the earth who could make the matter known unto the king. The king became angry and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed, and sent forth a decree to have them slain, and they sought Daniel and his fellows to put them to death.

Daniel, who had been faithful in his communion with the Lord, besought him in earnest prayer; not only so, but he desired of the king that he should give him time, telling him that he would show the king the interpretation. Daniel then made the matter known to three of his companions and desired that they pray to the Lord concerning this secret. It was an unusual requirement; it was something beyond the power of any person to know of themselves, and only the God of heaven was able to reveal that which was required. Daniel, who had known of the many wonderful answers to prayer among the prophets, the kings, and the people of Israel, believed that God was able to unfold to him the mysteries of this dream. He believed that if he and his brethren would go in earnest prayer before the Lord, that he would be enabled to accomplish the desire of his heart.

"Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowl-

edge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter." Daniel 2: 19-23.

Daniel then requested that he be brought before the king, and the king said to him, "Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?"

Daniel answered him, "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." He then told the king his dream and the interpretation thereof.

"The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.

Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon."

As time went on, decrees were made against the children of God, but the power of God was manifest in their deliverance.

The king had another dream, which the magicians and astrologers were unable to interpret, and Daniel was again called before the king and was enabled to interpret the dream. All things came to pass according to Daniel's interpretation.

When King Darius sat upon the throne, Daniel became one of the greatest men of the kingdom, and this caused considerable enmity on the part of the presidents and



princes, and they sought an occasion to have Daniel destroyed. They reasoned among themselves as to how this might be accomplished.

"Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Daniel 6: 5.

They were sure that Daniel would be faithful to his God and faithful in prayer, and that he would not bow down to the heathen gods, nor to any man. Therefore, they arranged a scheme by which they might entrap him, and asked the king to sign a decree "that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O King, he shall be cast into the den of lions."

Having in his mind how great this would make him appear in the sight of the people, and before the world, and not realizing the effect it would have upon Daniel, he signed the decree. Now came the testing time with Daniel, he knowing that such a decree had been signed, and realizing the anxiety of the people, who desired to destroy him, to know whether or not he would be true.

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Daniel 6: 10.

"Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God." No doubt, they went with great rejoicing to the king, who had signed a decree which could not be changed. They insisted that Daniel be cast into the den of lions, accordingly. The king was very sorrowful and displeased, and labored until the going down of the sun to deliver him, but there was no way of retracting from his decree. The



king commanded that Daniel be cast into the den of lions, but as he was about to be thrown in among those terrible beasts, the king said to Daniel, "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee."

Daniel was cast in among the lions, and a stone laid upon the mouth of the den and sealed with the king's own signet, in order that there be no intervention in the carrying out of their designs. Daniel had lived so faithful in performing his duties and living the life of a righteous man that the king not only had great confidence in him, but confidence in his God.

"Then the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him."

Very early the next morning the king hastened to the den of lions, and cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel, saying,

"O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

"Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, I have done no hurt."

The king was exceedingly glad, and had Daniel taken out, and found him to be unharmed.

It is said that when the people who had him cast into the den learned that the lions did not eat Daniel, they reported to the king that it was because the lions had been well fed. The king was so displeased because of their actions and their irreverence to the God of heaven, that he had them cast into the den of lions, but they did not fare so well as Daniel. "The lions had the mastery of

them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den."

This exemplified the faithful life of Daniel, and the power of his God, and caused the king to make another decree:

"Then King Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." Daniel 6: 25-27.

What the faithfulness of one man could do is worthy of consideration. All the people, nations and languages under the jurisdiction of Darius were to worship the God of Daniel, and all was brought about through faithfulness in prayer in his secret chamber. There is no child of God too weak or unworthy for their influence to reach far beyond their place of prayer, and upon their faithfulness to God depends the salvation of many souls.

In the ninth chapter of Daniel, is recorded a lengthy prayer, which he offered unto the Lord. In answer to this prayer, Daniel said that while he was yet speaking the Lord answered: "I am now come forth to give thee skill and undertsanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

At one time Daniel spent three weeks in supplication before the Lord, at the end of which time the Lord gave him to understand that he heard him from the beginning.

“In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. . . . Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.” Daniel 10:2-12.

This would be an encouragement to us, knowing that the Lord hears even from the beginning of our petitions, and that though we may continue with importunity there is certain victory in the end.

1K35-9

XXXII

David and Solomon

**H**E, whom the Lord called to be king over Israel, was once only a shepherd boy, who had learned to lead his flocks to green pastures and by the running waters of the brook.

By the help of the Lord, when he was yet but a lad, he was not only enabled to kill a bear and a lion, but met in battle the giant Goliath, who had been defying the armies of Israel, and no one dared go out to meet him. David, with his pebbles from the brook, went forth in the name of the God of heaven and slew the giant, and defeated the armies of the enemies of Israel, thus glorifying the name of the Lord, and for which he was held in high esteem by the people of Israel. His valor on this occasion, no doubt, caused him to be called to a higher position, and he was finally crowned king.

He fought battles with the sword, and oftentimes his enemies encamped round about him, giving him trouble on every hand, until at times he was almost discouraged. When he would begin to wander from the Lord, he would sometimes feel that his feet were "well nigh slipped." He would then flee to the Lord in earnest prayer, confess his wrong, and lay hold upon the promises of God, after which he would become bold and feel that he could face his most dangerous enemy. At one time, we hear

him say, "For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall."

Even after he became king, no doubt his mind often wandered back to his early shepherd days when he led his flocks. In later years, when great responsibilities rested upon him, and his enemies encamped round about him, he realized the Lord as a protector of himself and his people, and he said:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Psalms 23.

Now, we come to Solomon, the son of David, the wise man of all the earth; he, of whom it was said by the queen of Sheba, after she had heard of the great wisdom of Solomon, and had visited him, that the half had not been told. It will be of interest to know how Solomon acquired such wisdom and understanding. We are informed in the Word of God that "Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father."

"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shown unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of

heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" 1 Kings 3: 5-9.

"And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days." 1 Kings 3: 10-14.

King Solomon was not only able to confound the queen of Sheba with his wonderful wisdom, but wrote many proverbs and wise sayings. He built the temple, and became a wise ruler. So long as he obeyed the commands, the blessings of the Lord were upon him.

AC 21-4

### XXXIII

## The Apostles

**B**Y permitting our minds to dwell in meditation upon the beautiful sea of Galilee, we are carried back to apostolic days. Although this sea may not be more beautiful than many other bodies of water, yet it is made so to us on account of the sweet remembrances of the scenes and occurrences of those early days, of the work of the Saviour and the ministry of his followers. It was here, when walking along the seashore that Jesus began to call his disciples.

He chose twelve men for the work of the ministry. Their apostleship was born in the travail of prayer. Just before ordaining the twelve, Jesus spent the entire night in prayer. It was a weighty matter, and one of great responsibility to select and send forth men to preach the everlasting gospel and show forth the plan of salvation. Therefore, we should realize the necessity of earnest continued prayer when considering matters of importance today among the people of God. In selecting men for these great responsibilities, he did not go among the lawyers, doctors, and men of highest education, but sought them from the more common walks of life. He chose men who were willing to become his followers and be useful in doing the works he commanded, without stopping to argue or reason out matters from a stand-

point of science and philosophy. His command to them was "Follow me." Their obedience caused him to bestow upon them wonderful gifts and power, and to send them forth with a commission of power and authority.

The closing scenes in the life of Jesus were trying times to the apostles. They were with him in the Garden of Gethsemane while he was passing through the great ordeal of his life, pleading unto the Father in earnest prayer. They partook of the feast of the last passover with him, receiving from his hands the bread which represented his broken body, and the cup which represented his blood shed for the remission of sins.

No doubt, one of the great testing times of their lives was when Jesus was arrested. For three years they had given their time in preaching the gospel and in following him. Now he was arrested, and they were in the midst of a howling mob. One of their number had turned traitor; another one denied his master. Then following the trial came the crucifixion scene, but this being followed by the resurrection of Jesus brought some courage to their hearts. Still, their lives were in danger because of their religious belief, insomuch that when they met together they had the door shut for fear of the Jews.

Twice, while they were thus gathered together, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst and departed from them again. While they were in Galilee, Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Then he gave them his last commission, saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Matthew 28:19-20.

Previous to this he had told them of his death, and they had not fully understood. He had said that they should afterwards tarry at Jerusalem until they be endued with power.



In the first chapter of Acts, we have a record of his ascension into heaven, and the apostles gathered together at Jerusalem to wait upon the Lord in prayer. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." It was then that Peter explained to them concerning the things that had taken place.

It was while in that upper room, in that continued prayer-meeting, that they were enabled to realize the manifestation of the mighty power of God, which swept away from their minds all doubts and fears, and filled them with boldness. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:1-4.

There were people from the various countries round about, and when Peter and the apostles began preaching to them, those were present who crucified Jesus, and Peter plainly told them of their great sins and iniquities.

The people were surprised at the power manifest, and the knowledge which the apostles displayed, insomuch that the most wicked of them began to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The preaching was so effective that three thousand then and there yielded their hearts to God and believed on Jesus Christ and were baptized. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." It was undoubtedly a praying time among them, and one of praise and thanksgiving.

Their hearts had been changed and were now filled with the love and glory of God.

However, all did not yield their hearts to God, but there were many who continued to oppose the truth that was preached. Soon after this the lame man was healed, which was followed by persecution, but they continued to preach the Word with great boldness, and mighty signs and wonders followed. This filled the high priests and Sadducees with indignation, and they "laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison," but the Lord sent an angel to deliver them, and they were soon preaching in the temple again.

After the wonderful manifestations of the power of God in delivering them from prison, they were again brought before the rulers and reproved for their teaching. "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." They were beaten and charged to speak no more in that name.

By this time the work had become so great that it was necessary to select certain persons to look after the matter of providing for the poor, and the apostles said, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." After this they chose seven persons to look after the poor, and such things as were necessary in order to relieve the apostles of their burdens. After naming the seven, it says, "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." It seemed that almost everything of any great importance was accompanied by much prayer.

As the apostles went forth fulfilling their commission, the power of God was manifest, many souls were saved, and persecution followed; and God was with them in manifestation of power wherever they went.

## XXXIV

### Peter, His Weakness and Strength

**A**CCORDING to the record given by Matthew, Peter was the first apostle Jesus called to follow him, with the promise that he would make him a fisher of men. He had been a fisherman by occupation, and now he was to catch men, by preaching the Word and bringing them into the kingdom. By reading the life of Peter, we find that he was very outspoken and forward in his undertakings, and notwithstanding his weakness, he seems to have been one upon whom Jesus specially relied. Peter had the privilege of being on the Mount of Transfiguration and witnessing that notable scene. He was also in the Garden of Gethsemane, but just before the death of Jesus, he said to Peter, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter could scarcely believe that such could be the case, "And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." Luke 22: 31-33.

Peter declared his trueness the second time, saying, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I, and Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, If

I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all." Mark 14:27-31.

Soon after this they took Jesus to the house of the high priest, "And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain man beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him."

"And he denied him, saying, Woman. I know him not."

"And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not."

"And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilæan. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.

And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out and wept bitterly." Luke 22:54-62.

This was a sad time for Peter. It was a manifestation of his weakness. Before this he had thought he was so strong; Jesus had warned him, and told him what he would do, and now it had happened. However, that prayer of Jesus was not to be forgotten. He told Peter that he would pray for him, that his faith fail not. Did Peter's faith in Jesus fail? No. He had given away, yielded to sin, and on the spur of the moment had denied his master before his accusers. He had backslidden, and required repentance in order to again receive the favor

of the Lord, but he had not lost faith in Christ. The prayer of Jesus was answered, that even though he did deny him, yet he did not turn against him at heart, and take a stand with the enemies of Jesus and enter with them in persecuting the followers of Jesus. His repentance was genuine, and was regarded by the Lord, and later, after the resurrection, Jesus told those whom he met at the tomb to go and tell the disciples, "and Peter." It seems that he sent a special message to Peter, knowing that he would need special encouragement at this time.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter concluded, however, that he would go back to his old occupation.

He said to the disciples, "I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing." In the morning Jesus appeared unto them, after a time telling them to launch out into the deep and cast their net on the right side of the ship. They did so, catching an abundant supply.

After the day of Pentecost, there was a wonderful change in Peter. He had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and with boldness he stood up before those wicked Jews—those who crucified Christ—together with great crowds of people from the country round about. He preached with such boldness as to astonish all present. From that time forth, Peter was well known for his boldness and power with God. After the healing of the lame man, when they were brought before the rulers, Peter made such strong statements that these law-givers were astonished.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them,

that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it." However, they commanded the disciples to speak no more in the name of Jesus.

"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." The prayer-service held after this resulted in a wonderful awakening, and was followed by a mighty manifestation of the power of God. Soon after the people gathered together in one of the most wonderful divine healing services ever held.

"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Inso-much that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might over-shadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one." Acts 5:12-16.

Here Peter was again one of the most prominent of their number. No doubt, the fame of him had gone out because of the healing of the lame man through his instrumentality, and people having heard of it, thought that if they could only get in the shadow of Peter they would be healed.

Peter had, at various time, the experience of being cast into prison, and of being miraculously delivered.

Peter was a man of prayer, and in speaking of a vision at one time, he said, "I was in the city of Joppa pray-

ing." (Acts 11:15.) In this vision the Lord was trying to show Peter that the gospel was not only for the Jews but for the Gentiles as well and made known to him that he, with certain others, should go to the house of Cornelius, and there preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

Ofttimes Peter spoke with authority to the sick. At one time, while visiting the saints who dwelt at Lydda, he found a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed for eight years, being sick of the palsy; and Peter said unto him, "Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise and make thy bed. And he arose immediately." Acts 9:33-34.

This caused many people to turn to the Lord.

At Joppa, a woman, by the name of Dorcas, died, and after they had laid her in an upper chamber, the disciples, learning that Peter was at Joppa, sent for him. Peter put all of the people out of the room, "and kneeled down and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive." Acts 9:40, 41.

Peter's life was spent in preaching the gospel with boldness and power.

Ac 6:5-8

## XXXV

### Stephen and Cornelius

**S**TEPHEN was one of the seven persons chosen to look after the poor and the widows that were neglected, in the daily ministration of the means that had been cast at the disciples' feet for distribution. "And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. . . . And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." Acts 6:5 and 8.

He was also a minister of the gospel, and preached the Word with great authority. In his last sermon, he rehearsed the history of the Jews, from the time of Abraham to the death of Jesus Christ, and even up to the very day of the message. The reproof was so strong and penetrating that it is said, "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth."

His life paid for this message. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. They cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was



Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts 7: 55-59.

While he was thus being stoned, "he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Although they stoned him to death for telling the truth, yet his last prayer and last words were in their behalf, that the Lord might not lay the sin to their charge. Surely this was a manifestation of love and compassion. His last moments were spent on his knees in prayer.

Cornelius was not a Jew, but he had become favorable to the religion of the Jews, and believed in the coming Messiah. He was a Gentile, uncircumcised, and a centurion. Further than that, he was a devout man—a man of prayer. It is said of him that he was "one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway," and the Lord answered him, saying, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." Acts 10: 2 and 4.

The Lord told him to send men to Joppa for Simon Peter, advising him that Peter would be able to tell him what he ought to do. When the men arrived at Joppa, Peter was in prayer, and the Lord had given him a special revelation. It is recorded that "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour." The men delivered their message to Peter, and he went to the house of Cornelius, where he made known to him what the Lord had shown him concerning the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles; and he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10: 34, 35.

While Peter preached, the Holy Ghost fell on all who listened, and the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles; and Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Thus we find that Stephen, of Jewish ancestry, and Cornelius, a Gentile, were both men of prayer, honored of God and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ac 226-10

## XXXVI

### Paul, in Time of Trial

**P**AUL, who was formerly known as Saul of Tarsus, was a man of considerable education and ability. In his earlier days he was one of the most bitter opponents of the gospel of Jesus Christ and a persecutor of all Christians. It was while on his way to Damascus, with authority to cast the disciples of Christ into prison, or consent to their death, that he was stopped by the power of God. Some time afterwards, when brought before the rulers, he told of the incident in the following language:

“And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from Heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it

shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." Acts 22:6-10.

As wicked as he was, he was able to recognize the voice as being from heaven, and inquired, "Who art thou, Lord?" He was there given to understand that through his persecution of the saints he was persecuting Jesus. The light was so great that he had to be led to Damascus, where he was instructed what to do. He yielded himself to the Lord, and afterwards came to Jerusalem, and was praying in the temple. There the Lord made known to him that he was to leave Jerusalem and go among the Gentiles. He said, "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." Acts 22:10, 20.

He had been very bitter in his persecutions, but now was preaching the same gospel that he had before been opposing. Having so severely punished those who believed on Jesus, now that he was one with them in belief, he could more fully sympathize with those who were persecuted and knew how to pray for the persecutors. From the time of his conversion, his life was one of continual trial and victory. At one time, while in Cæsarea, a certain prophet took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

Many times Paul realized what it was to be bound in chains and cast into prison. He was, at one time, bound in prison, and was singing and praising God at the midnight hour, when there came an earthquake, and the

prisoners were loosed and the prison doors were opened. It was that night that the jailer was converted and his entire household constrained to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was a man of prayer, and it is often recorded that he sought the Lord in earnest supplication. In one place it speaks about his seeking the Lord thrice for a certain matter. While the Lord did not see fit to remove the cause of the burden of his heart, he gave him a satisfactory answer—"My grace is sufficient." It seemed that wherever he went bonds and imprisonment awaited him, but the Lord gave him an abundance of grace for every trial. When he came to Ephesus, he said to the elders at that place, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews." Acts 20: 18, 19.

He was, at one time, dragged out of the city by an angry mob, but the disciples gathered round his lifeless form, and no doubt in earnest prayer lifted their hearts to God in his behalf. Soon Paul was up and on his way to preach the gospel to other cities.

At another time, a number of the Jews banded together and made a vow that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. The plot was made known, and the Lord opened a way for Paul's deliverance.

While on his way to Rome he had a terrible experience of shipwreck, and although still a prisoner, when they landed on an island, he was used of the Lord in the healing of the sick and in causing many to believe.

He was brought before rulers and governors, and in writing to the Corinthian brethren, he tells of his

abundant labors and the persecutions which he suffered—"In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." 2 Corinthians 11:23-28.

After all this, he says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18.

Paul gave no place in his experience for backsliding. Hear him ask the question: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Then comes the positive answer. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:37-39.

Paul spent many years in the gospel work. He said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to

abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:11-13.

In the last days of his ripe old age, he was able to verify his former testimony, so that when the time came that arrangements had been made for his execution, he said, "I have kept the faith,"

XXXVII

Ac 4 31.32

## The Prayer of the Church

**G**O where you may on the face of the earth, wherever a spiritual church is to be found, there will invariably be a body of people who not only have great faith and confidence in God, but are given to much prayer.

When the people of God had assembled at Jerusalem, after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, he commanded them to wait for the promise of the father and they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. It is said "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." This waiting together, with one accord, and entreating the Lord in earnest prayer, was followed by a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and a fulfillment of the promise that had been given them.

Not long after the day of Pentecost, when some of the apostles were commanded not to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ any more, they met together with the church, and again with one accord, offered up earnest petitions unto the Lord. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake



the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." Acts 4:31, 32.

When king Herod had stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church, and had killed James, the brother of John, with the sword, and was about to take the life of Peter, also, having cast him into prison, there was quite an anxiety on the part of the church in his behalf. "But prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." The time had come when Herod was about to take Peter from the prison to have him executed. "The same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him." Acts 12:6-10. This was a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but what caused it? Over in another part of the city, the church had gathered together and were in earnest prayer in his behalf. James having already been put to death, and they knowing that the time was now at hand for the taking of Peter's life which would likely be followed by a similar action with

others of the apostles and followers of Jesus, the matter had become a serious one with them. No doubt, there was much weeping and earnest pleading, not only in behalf of Peter, but for the protection of others also.

In the meantime, Peter was making his way along the streets of the city, and was just awakening to a realization of the fact that it was not a dream. He said to himself: "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." After considering the matter, he made his way to the house of Mary, "where many were gathered together praying." Upon knocking at the door, and responding to the call within, his voice was recognized, but they could scarcely believe that it was Peter, and said, "It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished." Although they had been praying for his deliverance, it did not come in the way that they had been expecting. No doubt, they had in mind that God would over-rule the matter until morning, and when he would be brought before the rulers, the Lord would change their minds and cause them to be lenient toward him, and set him free, but for him to come while they were yet praying was beyond their expectations. "But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison."

The Lord not only heard and answered prayer in the days of the apostles, but even to this day honors the prayer of faith, when offered by his children. We read in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and for ever."

A few years ago, a young man of our acquaintance was arrested in the State of Colorado, on a charge of which he constantly declared his innocence. Nevertheless, the court adjudged him guilty, and he was sent to the state prison for a term of twelve years. After he had been there for several months, he wrote to me, after which I visited him in the prison. Upon my arrival at the prison, inquiry was made as to the moral standing of the young man. The officials stated that he was one of the finest young men in the penitentiary, and that prison was no place for such a man. Efforts were made to secure his release, but of no avail.

A few more months passed by, when one day we received a letter from him, asking us to have prayer in his behalf, saying, "I wish you would pray that the Lord may deliver me out of this awful hole." We were then living at Grand Junction, Michigan, more than a thousand miles away. That evening the church met together at their regular prayer-meeting; the letter was read, and earnest prayer offered in his behalf. A few days later, or just as soon as a letter could reach us, we received word from him, with the following statement: "I have been working in a large potato field; was taken to Buena Vista, where I have more liberty."

The Lord had answered prayer according to his request, and had delivered him out of the former prison. He had not asked prayer for his perfect deliverance from prison.

Nearly six months later, we received another letter from him, saying, "I believe that if the good people at your place will pray again for me, the Lord will let me out of prison." Again, it was the night for our regular prayer-meeting. I read the letter publicly, and everyone in the house joined in earnest prayer for the Lord to

deliver this young man out of prison. After we arose from our knees, one brother said, "I know God hears and answers prayer." He then began to leap and shout and to declare the work accomplished, and there was a general outbreak of praises to God, by those present. We knew nothing of the outlook for his deliverance, only that the authorities had before refused to grant pardon. The next morning, after prayer was offered, we received a telegram, as follows: "I have just received my liberty." This was gratifying to us, knowing that it was in direct answer to our prayer.

We have not met this young man since that time, but have had correspondence with him, and he has since married a respectable woman and they have a family of children.

Citations could be given of many wonderful manifestations of the power of God in these last days, but there is one in particular that it will, no doubt, be proper to mention here, although it has been published in many papers and books. In the month of June, 1883, at a camp-meeting near Bangor, Michigan, Sister Emma Miller, of Battle Creek, Michigan, who had been totally blind for nearly three years, came to the meeting with the expectation of receiving her sight in answer to prayer. A day was appointed for fasting and prayer in her behalf. The church came together with one accord, sending up earnest petitions to the Lord for the restoration of her sight. Late in the afternoon, while they were still waiting upon the Lord in earnest prayer in her behalf, her eyes suddenly opened, and her sight was perfectly restored, insomuch that she was able to walk out into the bright sunlight without any discomfort. Previous to this time she had been obliged to remain in a dark room or have her eyes heavily bandaged. She

picked up the New Testament, and read from it before the congregation. This was an occasion of much praise and thanksgiving on the part of the church, because the Lord had heard and answered their prayers.

1P 16-8

## XXXVIII

### Jesus, Our Example

**J**ESUS is our example in time of temptation, trial, persecution and prayer. It is said of him that he was tempted in all points like as we are. It is impossible for us to realize the great temptations through which he passed while in the wilderness being tempted of the devil. He remained faithful and resisted the devil, and met him with the Word of God, saying, "It is written." He would then tell the devil what was written, finally giving him a positive rebuke, which caused the evil one to flee from him. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, the apostle says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Considering this promise, and taking Jesus as our example, we are given an inspiration to go through the greatest temptations and trials. In the time of deepest trial, he felt the weakness of his humanity, but would flee to the Father in prayer and would receive strength and whatever help was needed. In like manner, we can receive strength even in time of trial, remembering the words of Peter, "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it

be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter 1:6-8.

It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus passed through the greatest trial of his life. Knowing that the time had come for him to pass through the great ordeal of the crucifixion, his humanity shrank from it. He went aside from his disciples and there with the greatest earnestness that man ever prayed, he implored the father. Just before leaving the disciples, he had said, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. . . . My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matthew 26:36-39.

"He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

"And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."

He prayed so earnestly that his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground, and Luke says:

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."

One beautiful thought in connection with his prayer in this time of great trial was his submission to the will of the Father, knowing that it would cost him his life unless the Father saw fit to change matters, but he humbly submitted, and said, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." What a lesson to us!

His mission into the world was to redeem fallen men, by giving his life; and while he felt the weakness of humanity, as we feel it, nevertheless he was submissive and ready to fulfill the mission, even at the cost of his life. There are now many times when people fail to receive the needed help from the Lord because of a lack of perfect submission to his will. They are not willing to go through the necessary suffering in order to accomplish the proper end. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Peter 2:21-23.

He instructed his followers what to do in case of persecution, and said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11, 12.

When he was persecuted, and even hanged upon the cross by his enemies, he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He was ever ready to forgive his enemies, and taught that we should do the same. He said, "Forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also, which is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11:25, 26.

In the seventeenth chapter of John, he sets us an example of praying for others. After offering an earnest petition for his disciples, he said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me



through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This prayer includes us. It is one of the longest prayers that Jesus offered, of which we have a record.

At another time we find him at the place where Lazarus was buried, and just before commanding the dead man to come forth from the tomb, Jesus lifted his eyes toward heaven, and said "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always." In like manner we should come to the Lord with our petitions, with that confidence that the Lord hears us, as it is then that we can appropriate the promise of I John 5: 14, 15.

mt 1129

## XXXIX

### Answer Promised to the Meek

**F**OR people to exhibit meekness in their lives, is to show forth gentleness, kindness, and to not be easily provoked or irritated, but given to forbearance under injuries. Jesus represented himself as being meek, when he said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29.

The prophets of old were examples of meekness. James says, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:10, 11.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5.

"The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord." Isaiah 29:19.

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Philippians 2:14, 15. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." Ephesians 4:2.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Galatians 6: 1.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.” Galatians 5: 22, 23.

“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.” 1 Peter 2: 20, 21.

There are times, when in the midst of persecution, opposition and oppression, a manifestation of the spirit of meekness will be the means of winning the persecutors and oppressors to the ways of truth and righteousness, or will cause the oppressions to cease; and will bring the blessings of God down upon the one who walks in the way of meekness and humility.

## Answer Promised to the Penitent

**T**HE thief on the cross found favor with God in his dying hour. He said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

And Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23: 42, 43.

A beautiful illustration of favor granted to the penitent is given in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, where the prodigal son had wandered away from home and spent all that he had in riotous living. "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." This poor prodigal realized his wretched condition, and made a decision to go to his father, acknowledge his wrongs, confess his sins, and ask forgiveness. Upon his return, with all his heart, he began to make his confessions, but had scarcely begun when his father gave him to understand that he was received as his son, and all the past forgiven. This is given us to show the great mercy and compassion which the Lord extends to sinners who will turn from their sins and follow him.

In the Word of God are many precious promises to encourage those who have grieved the Lord, or sinned against him, and not only is he able, but is also ready and willing to fulfill his promises, whenever the conditions are met by those in need of help.

“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55: 6, 7.

“Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.” Ezekiel 33: 14-16.

Jesus said, “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6: 14, 15.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2: 38.

“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all:) . . . To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” Acts 10: 36, 43.

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren,

that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13: 38, 39.

"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 8: 12.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 7, 9.

*Jonah 2*

## XLI

### Promise in Time of Adversity

**I**T was under adverse circumstances that Jonah offered up his petitions to God. "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly." Jonah 2: 1. The Lord had compassion upon him, when he acknowledged to the heathen sailors his wrong, and was willing to be cast overboard at the mercy of the Lord. He was in a position where his only hope was in his willingness to obey God, and he was well aware of the great mercy of God extended to those who were willing and obedient.

It was also under adverse circumstances that Stephen prayed the Lord to forgive the people when they were stoning him to death, and asked the Lord to receive his spirit, knowing that there was abundant entrance for him into the regions of the blessed.

When Jesus was going about from place to place preaching, he was persecuted and opposed on every hand. The Pharisees said of him, "We know that this man is a sinner." At one time he was called a "wine bibber," and at another time was accused of being possessed of a devil. Notwithstanding this, he was faithful in preaching the gospel, and in his devotion to the Father.

It oftentimes happens that we cannot understand why circumstances should be as they are. Sometimes, viewing the matter from a human standpoint, there is no way of

understanding how God can get any glory out of existing circumstances. Nevertheless, there is a promise to the faithful that all will be well.

An incident of this kind occurred a few years ago, and at the time I was unable to know just how the Lord would make it work out to his glory and to my good. I met with a serious accident, and immediately the promise in Romans 8:28 flashed into my mind, and I said, "The Bible says, 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' and no doubt it is so, because the Bible says so, but I cannot see where there can be any good come from this. However, I suppose it will come, for I love God." Although the accident caused much suffering, it was about three days before I realized the good results which followed. At the end of that time, in answer to prayer, the Lord completely healed me, which caused a man and his wife to fully yield themselves to God, and so filled him with faith that he was enabled to receive complete healing of a serious disease of his body. It was then that I was enabled to understand the fulfillment of Romans 8:28, in this particular experience through which I had just been permitted to pass, and I felt well repaid for all my suffering.

There are many precious promises in the Word of God to those who are in trouble, and who feel that almost everything is against them. In times when the trials and temptations seem great, we can read, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." James 1:12.



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## XLII

### Answer Delayed

**W**HEN people come to the Lord in prayer, desiring to know his will concerning the burden of their hearts, or to have some special thing accomplished, it is then that there is an anxiety if the requests are not granted. It frequently happens, however, that the Lord in his wisdom sees best to delay the answer. There are various reasons for so doing. Sometimes, if an immediate answer was given, it would thwart his plan regarding other things, and would not be best for the one offering the petition. There are also times when there are lessons to be learned, and some inquiry of the Lord as to why the answer was withheld would bring a revelation to the mind, which would prove much more profitable than a direct answer to the petition offered. Again, there may be hindrances in the way, which can be removed by the one offering the prayer, or it might be necessary that certain things be accomplished before the hindrances could be removed.

There are given in the Bible some instances which should encourage us to patiently wait upon the Lord. Among such, may be mentioned the case of Naaman, the leper. He, having learned of the prophet in Israel, through the instrumentality of a little Jewish maid, with great pomp proceeded to the place in Israel where he could meet this Man of God. After his arrival, with

caravan and gifts, he sent a servant to the prophet to make known the purpose of his visit. Naaman was very much displeased with his reception. He, being a man of high rank, supposed that the prophet would at least make some great display in view of his position. Elisha, no doubt knew that Naaman had a proud heart and needed to learn the lesson of humility and obedience, also, the lesson of simplicity. "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." This displeased Naaman. He considered that he should be treated with greater honor. He said, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord, his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." 2 Kings 5: 11, 12. It was not without considerable effort that the servants of Naaman were able to prevail upon him to manifest the spirit of humility and be obedient to the words of the prophet. They said to him: "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Knowing that it was his only hope of recovery, as his disease was beyond human skill to recover, Naaman decided to do as the prophet had said. "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

Had Naaman gone to one of the rivers of Damascus, would he have been healed? No. Had he gone to the River Jordan and washed himself once, and refused to

wash again, the result would have been a failure. After he had washed the sixth time, there was still no change; he was yet a leper. Suppose he had said, "I have now washed six times, and there is no sign of healing, no indications of receiving any help, therefore, I will not wash again." What would have been the result? A complete failure. He did not stop with the sixth washing, but had decided in his heart that he would obey the entire command of the prophet. He had turned from his haughty ways and decided to comply in humble obedience, and it was after he had fully met the required conditions that the power of God was manifest, and he was delivered from the leprosy and made well.

He returned to bestow gifts upon the prophet, because of the wonderful work wrought in his body, but the prophet utterly refused to receive anything whatever, as it was a work wrought by the power of God. This instance is one of great benefit to us, as it teaches the necessity of humility and obedience, and also of simplicity and faith.

The ten lepers, which came to Jesus for healing, were not instantly healed while in his presence, as were many others, of which the Word of God gives record, but were told to go and show themselves unto the priest, according to the requirements of the law at that time. As they went their way they were cleansed of the leprosy. Their faith was manifest in their obedience to his word.

In the twenty-second Psalm, we read how David was in great distress, and was mightily calling upon the Lord for help. He made some earnest appeals to the Lord, and with them made promises. He promised the Lord that if he would deliver him, he would declare the name of the Lord unto his brethren and praise him in the midst of the congregation. It was not long after this until

David was made to realize the wonderful goodness of God, of which he gives expression in the twenty-third Psalm.

A beautiful lesson of faith and trust is given in the account of the Syrophenician woman, in the fifteenth chapter of Matthew. Her daughter was grievously vexed with a devil, and she came to Jesus, asking him to have mercy on her in behalf of her daughter, but Jesus "answered her not a word." His disciples then came and wanted him to send her away, but still she pressed her case, and he said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He meant by this that he was sent to the Jews, and she was not a Jew. Still she did not give up the struggle, but came and worshiped him, saying, "Lord, help me." He gave her another answer, but still she insisted that she must have help. "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Had she not persisted in having a favorable answer, she never would have received the help for her daughter.

Many fail in receiving help from God, because he does not answer at the time of their first appeal. In connection with this, we should not forget how Daniel plead before the Lord for three full weeks before receiving an answer. When the answer came, the Lord gave Daniel to understand that he had heard his petition from the first day that he began to call upon him. If the thing for which you are petitioning the Lord is not out of harmony with his word, and his name can be glorified in granting a favorable answer, do not become discouraged and throw down the shield of faith, and throw away your armor, but press the battle to the gates, as it were, where by faith you can enter in victoriously. Throw

away all doubts, and give no place for discouragement. See to it that your consecration is fully in line with the will of God, and the Lord will honor your faith; and even should there be a delay in sending the answer, you will receive great benefit in the end and feel greatly rewarded for your faithfulness.

## Answer Withheld

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**O**PPPOSITION and oppression may beset us on every hand, and there may be times when, from a human standpoint, it would seem that it would be more to the glory of God for certain things to be removed, or accomplished, when God, in his wisdom, has planned otherwise. Again, petitions are offered, which are answered by what has already been decreed, and then there are instances where an answer is given, not according to the request made, but one that proves to be satisfactory to the petitioner, who is subject to the will of God.

When Jesus was praying in the garden of Gethsemane, that the Father might let the cup of suffering pass from him, if possible, nevertheless he said, "Not my will, but thine be done." Here the words of the answer of the Father are not recorded, but he sent an angel and strengthened Jesus for the ordeal through which he was to pass; and it was so plain to Jesus that it was the will of the Father for him to go through the suffering that he submitted and was ready to go forth in accordance therewith and meet whatever might befall him.

Another instance of withholding the answer to prayer, was that where Paul prayed three times concerning a certain matter, and even when the answer did come it was not in accordance with his petition, but it was satis-

factory to Paul, when it came to him in these words, "My grace is sufficient." Paul could go forth with confidence, realizing that through whatever suffering he might have to pass, the Lord would give him sufficient grace, insomuch that he could go through with victory and glorify the name of the Lord.

At one time Moses asked that he might be permitted to cross over Jordan into the land of Canaan, but the Lord answered his petition by taking him up into the mountain, where he could look over into the land and get a view of the beautiful country. He was so well satisfied that the Lord was directing in the matter that he called Joshua, and delivered a message of encouragement to him, as the future leader of the children of Israel, assuring him that the Lord would be his helper so long as he walked uprightly before him, and was obedient in all things.

There is such a thing as "praying through," as some express it, until the will of God is known regarding the petition offered. Many people fail and come short of knowing the will of God, because of a lack of importunity or coming to him in obedience and humility of heart, with the proper simplicity.

XLIV

Signs Asked For

**A**MONG the people of God of olden times, there were those who could trust God with unwavering faith, and when the Lord spoke to them, no matter how great the responsibility, they were ready for action. Again, there were those, whom God had chosen for a special work, who felt it necessary that they have some special evidence that God would stand by them in time of testing, or in other words, that he would do for them that which he had promised to do. They felt it necessary that God verify his word beforehand by some particular sign, as an additional evidence of his faithfulness to them.

When Gideon was called of the Lord to go and deliver the Israelites out of the hand of the Midianites, it seemed too great an undertaking for him. He felt his inability, and replied, "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me." The Lord was good enough to give Gideon a sign, and yet he was not satisfied, but asked for another sign, saying, "If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold I will put a fleece



of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. And Gideon said unto God, let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night; for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground." Judges 6: 36-40. After all this had taken place, Gideon decided to obey the Lord, and found that the Lord was with him, as he had promised, and enabled him to put the Midianites to flight.

The twentieth chapter of second Kings gives a record of the prayer of King Hezekiah, when he was at the point of death, and had received the message that he would die. His prayer was as follows:

"I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight."

"And Hezekiah wept sore."

Immediately the Lord sent the messenger back to the king, and said unto him, "Tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years." It will be noticed that the Lord here said that he heard the prayer of Hezekiah; that he saw his tears, and said he would heal him. These three things are worthy of notice, and yet as positively as the

matter was laid before Hezekiah, he still wanted a sign from the Lord.

“And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the Lord shall heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day?” The prophet gave him to understand that the Lord would do that which he had promised.

“And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?” Isaiah was willing to have the integrity of the Lord tested even by a sign. Hezekiah requested that the dial go back ten degrees, and the prophet called upon the Lord; and the shadow was brought backward ten degrees.

While it was unnecessary for Hezekiah to require such a thing of the Lord, yet the Lord granted it unto him through the prophet.

We read in the first chapter of Hebrews that God, who “At sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” We have access to the Father through Jesus Christ, and we have many precious promises. We also read that the “word of God cannot be broken.” Notwithstanding all this, there are people in this day and age of the world, who are still calling on God for some special sign that he will fulfill his word.

We once knew of a woman who, when she desired anything special from the Lord, would close her eyes, open the Bible, and place her finger upon the page, expecting the Lord to direct her finger to a passage of Scripture that would serve as a sign to her as to whether or not the Lord would grant her petition. People who

follow such a method, oftentimes place the finger upon a passage that has no bearing whatever upon the case in question, or perhaps is in direct opposition to the answer desired. Therefore, they are inclined to close the book, and also their eyes, and repeat the performance until they do find a Scripture that will give a satisfactory answer. This is only guess work, and not always by the direction of the Holy Spirit. The woman mentioned was very much afflicted, having suffered for some time, and was somewhat in doubt as to whether she would recover from her sickness. While considering the matter, she decided to resort to her old method of finding out the will of God, and as her finger came down on the sacred page, she read the following words: "And the woman died, also." This was not a satisfactory answer, so she hastily repeated the act, hoping to receive a favorable indication of her recovery.

It is true that many times people in sore distress and great perplexity as to just what is the will of God concerning certain matters can open their Bibles, and perhaps the first passage of Scripture they see will be one of great comfort to them. It may even be that the Spirit of the Lord has directed them to it for their encouragement, but to get into the habit of opening the Bible at random and placing the finger upon a certain passage of Scripture is not to be depended upon as being the leading of the Holy Spirit.

There are many precious promises given in the Word of God, which cannot be gainsaid. Under such circumstances, there is no necessity of asking the Lord for a further sign.

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## XLV

### Hypocritical Prayers

**T**HE Pharisees of olden times were, many of them, hypocrites, and oftentimes put on an air of sanctity and made great pretensions of religious fervency, offering long prayers in public places, to be seen and heard of men. Jesus said of them, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:7-9.

"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6:46.

Those who offer up prayers, and intend to continue in sin, need not hope to have power with God, nor receive favor in his sight in answer to their petitions. Such people must turn from their hypocrisy, repent of their sins, and the Lord will then hear and answer their prayers. The hypocrite, the egotistical person, no matter how great the profession of piety and religion, is a stranger to the meek and lowly Jesus and knows nothing of the sweetness of communion with him. There is no fellowship of the Spirit, and the words of such persons are only cold and formal, even though accompanied by shouting and spoken in a loud tone of voice, with much zeal and great fervency.

The instruction which Jesus gave, was "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6: 5, 6.

By this he did not mean that prayer should not be offered except in the secret chamber, but that our prayers should be offered in such a manner as to have our communion entirely with the Lord and not for the purpose of being heard of men.

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## XLVI

### Vain Repetitions

**T**HERE is quite a difference between the repeating of an earnest, fervent petition to the Lord, which is productive of good results, and that of vain repetitions, which are only empty sayings, worthless and meaningless. It is true that while Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane he prayed three times, repeating the same words, but these words were full of meaning, and accompanied by a perfect submission to the Father. There may be much earnestness manifest in the repetition of prayers that are vain, or in other words, are empty and worthless, and the time spent in saying them over is wasted. It is not communion with God. The one who is in the habit of making vain repetitions in prayer, does not expect an answer, except it be after the close of this life.

The Mohammedans are very faithful in repeating their prayers at least five times a day, and the prayers are said as many times more as their time for devotion will permit, and with most of these prayers they are not expecting any help for the present time. In like manner the Roman Catholics are very faithful in counting the beads of the Rosary, and repeating the Ave Maria and the Pater-noster.

The people of Tibet believe that every time they turn their prayer wheel, with its inscribed prayers, or when

their prayer flags are wafted by the wind, prayers ascend in their behalf. Sometimes this is done with considerable zeal, and at other times it is done in a mechanical way, with little or no concern.

There are many similar modes of offering petitions to God, not only among the heathen and uncivilized, but in the more enlightened countries the repetitions are similar to that of the Pharisee and avail nothing.

Jesus said, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Matthew 6: 7, 8.

A prayer is of no avail, and amounts to nothing, except it be a prayer of faith. One must have confidence in God, and believe that he hears and will do that which is best to do under the circumstances. He must not only be considered a God of wisdom, power and ability, but a God of love and compassion; one in whom the utmost confidence can be placed, and who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and desires to lend a helping hand in time of need. On the other hand, the one who offers the prayer must not only realize his own helplessness without the help of the Lord, but must know that with his help power is given to cause the enemy to flee, and that the necessary aid and strength will be granted in time of need.

With this conception of the matter, one is not apt to fall into the rut of offering vain repetitions, instead of giving expression according to the desires of the heart.

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## XLVII

### What to Say While at Prayer

**I**T is in times of adversity and deep distress, or at the approach of a calamity and oppression that the reckless sinner and wayward child is inclined to call upon God for help. What to say, and, will he hear? are matters of no little importance at such a time. The Word of the Lord now comes to remembrance, "Your sins have separated between you and your God." Here, the enemy of souls takes advantage of the opportunity, and suggests that it is useless to pray, as the Lord "heareth not sinners." In like manner, as Satan quoted Scripture to Jesus, when he was undergoing great temptations in the wilderness, so will he now quote the sayings of the Lord to sinners, and those who are tried and tempted, misapplying them to suit his purpose. In the Word of God, we find these words of encouragement to the sinner: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28: 13. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1: 18. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11: 28. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 9. By these words, the worst



sinners are made to realize that there is hope for their deliverance. A knowledge of this creates hope, but how to approach God, and what to say in order to gain his favor is a matter of weighty consideration. With the heart thus burdened, one is not apt to be in a mood to give expression in fluency of speech.

When those wicked men, who crucified Jesus, were told of their sins, and were pricked to the heart, they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter told them there was hope for every one of them, but that they must repent of their sins. (Acts 2:38.)

It was when the publican realized the wretchedness of his condition that he offered a prayer in the following words: "God, be merciful to me a sinner," (Luke 18:13), and he was forgiven.

The thief, at the hour of his death, with a repentant heart, called upon Jesus for help, saying, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." (Luke 23:42.) That short fervent prayer was not turned aside unnoticed, but Jesus said to him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Just what to say when in prayer will depend much upon the place and circumstances. Communion with the Lord should be in such manner as to best express our need, or give vent to our feelings. There are times when a few words will be much more appropriate and effectual than would be a prayer of great length.

A few years ago, while traveling through the state of Ohio, I was obliged to change cars at Bradford Junction. It was ten o'clock when the train left the station, and a few minutes later the conductor took my ticket, and I made myself comfortable for the night, first saying, "Lord, give me a safe journey." Soon I was sound asleep. Nearly three hours later, upon awakening, I

heard some of the passengers conversing about a wreck. After listening to their conversation for a time, I concluded that ours or some other train, on the same road, had met with an accident. I arose, crossed the aisle, and seating myself beside one of the passengers, asked, "Where was the wreck?" He burst forth in laughter, saying, "Man, it never waked you up?" They had a laugh at my expense, and he then told me that our train had been wrecked and all in front of our coach derailed and thrown into a ditch, but that the wheels of our coach came within about two feet of the broken rail and stopped. The engineer blew the signal whistle for the wrecking train, which had come and taken our car back to the next town, nearly seven miles distant. All this happened without my knowledge. I told the man I had asked the Lord to give me a safe journey, and he said, "Well, he certainly did give you a safe journey." The prayer was one of a few words, but not forgotten by the Lord. I have traveled thousands of miles, in many countries, but scarcely ever entered the cars without asking the Lord to give me a safe journey. I have passed the scene of many wrecks, but the Lord has always honored my prayer for protection.

When coming to the Lord in prayer, one should come as to a loving earthly father, with the utmost confidence, and converse as with a familiar friend. Let it be a heart to heart talk with the Lord. There will be times when the burden of your heart will be principally concerning yourself and pertaining to your own personal needs. Your needs may be so numerous that you hardly know where to begin with your petitions and supplications. Times of testing may come, and there may be presented puzzling questions, about which you feel you must know the will of God; temptations, accompanied by discouragement.

ments, and opposition and oppression come against you, while persecutions are heaped upon you. There may be no one to whom you can confide the secrets or burden of your heart, and while wading through deep waters, and the "enemy comes in like a flood," it is then that you must learn to wait upon the Lord in confidence, realizing your safety and security in him, knowing that at such times the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him.

There will be times, even with those who are accustomed to prayer, when the burden of the soul will be so great that scarcely a word can be uttered; power to express the feelings of the heart has seemingly vanished, and only groanings can be uttered. It is then that the words of the apostle are realized, wherein he says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8: 26-27.

At such times, it may seem impossible to know just what is the will of God, or what is the best course to pursue, but if we learn to wait patiently upon him, with a determination to be in perfect submission to his will, whatever it may be, he will make intercession "according to the will of God," even though one does not know his will, thus the unuttered prayer properly reaches the throne. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

There may be times when we are unable to see wherein any good can result from the present happenings and circumstances, but so sure as we fully trust and believe,

there will be a fulfillment of this promise to our entire satisfaction. It may not be immediate, but it will come. There may, and there may not be a special assurance at the time of prayer that all will be well, but at such times it is well to remember the words of the Psalmist, David, "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him." Psalms 37:7. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Psalms 37:4, 5.

In communing with the Lord, our words should not all be expressed in the form of a petition or supplication, but the prayer should be well seasoned with expressions of adoration, praise and thanksgiving, extolling his name by telling him of his greatness, and ability, rendering unto him due honor and praise.

In the 104th Psalm, the writer gives a wonderful tribute of praise, beginning with the following words: "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty."

When there are a number of people assembled together for special prayer, they must be of one accord, that is, all in harmony, and praying for the same thing, in order to prevail with the Lord. If only one should pray aloud, it should be with fervency, and directly concerning the thing desired, that all may be able to say amen, or sanction in their thoughts and unite their faith with the one who is offering the petition.

It is well to note the procedure of the apostles (Acts 4:23-30), when sorely pressed and threatened by their persecutors. They gathered together with those who were faithful followers of Jesus, and talked over the matter, until all understood the critical situation. "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord,

thou are God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is." Thus they continued referring the Lord to his greatness, and the oppressions that had been against him and his cause during the past; then they came directly to the point, or matter under consideration, concerning their present needs, saying, "Now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."

They prayed "with one accord." One was not praying for spiritual help, another for daily food, and others that the Lord might save sinners, but all joined in extolling the name of the Lord, and later in calling for the thing needed. As they prayed, they believed, and their petition was not passed by unheeded.

At one time, when the people of Israel had wandered from the ways of the Lord, the prophet Daniel became much burdened for their return to the ways of righteousness, and he began to seek the Lord by prayer and supplication. He says, "And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. . . . Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." Daniel 9: 4-6, 17-19.

There are some points in this prayer worthy of consideration. The people had sinned, and Daniel confessed it to the Lord. First, he referred to the greatness of the Lord, and to his goodness and great mercies, and then very earnestly implored forgiveness. Did the Lord heed his cry? Yes. An immediate answer came, as Daniel said, "Whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication."

In order to be effectual, prayer must be something more than mere words. It must be the sincere desire of the heart. The supplication must be in faith, believing that he hears and answers. The prayer free from doubts is the one that reaches the throne and brings an answer. Make use of the confidence you have in him, and exercise your faith by believing that he grants your petition. Learn a lesson from the words of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, when he "lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always." John 11: 41, 42. Then, with confidence, he commanded Lazarus to come forth, and he came at the command.

The prayer must be suited to the place and occasion, according to the existing circumstances. There may be times when one may continue in communion with the Lord a great length of time, while at another time it

would be an impossibility or quite out of place to do so.

When Peter undertook to walk upon the water, he saw the great waves of the sea, and was afraid, and began to sink. He had no time for preliminaries in prayer—no time to extol the name of the Lord by referring him to his greatness, abilities, goodness, and mercies; but had to suit his words to the occasion, and condense them as much as possible, and pray to the point, telling just what he desired of the Lord. It had to be expressed on the impulse of the moment, and he cried out: "Lord, save me." (Matthew 14:30.) The prayer was effectual. Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, but gave him to understand that there was no necessity of his giving way to doubts. He said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Notwithstanding what has been said as to how to pray, and how others have prayed, some will say, "But what shall I say when I pray?" There is no fixed rule. Begin to talk to God as you would to your best friend. Be natural, that is, pray your own prayers, and do not try to pray the prayers of someone else. Sometimes you may feel like beginning by telling the Lord of his goodness to you and others, for giving health, strength, food, clothing, and many other things that he has provided, and even in the darkest hour and greatest trial, you can thank him that things are no worse than they really are at the present time. At other times, you may feel like beginning with a petition, telling all about your needs, both temporal and spiritual. When you have done this, you must believe that he hears, and at this point it is well to appropriate 1 John 5:14, 15 to your prayers.

Some have procured printed prayers, or have written some of their own, and committed them to memory, that



they might be able to repeat them. Others repeat only the Lord's prayer as given in Matthew 6:9-15. While these may, to some extent, be helpful in devotional exercises, also as a drill for the mind, yet they do not bring answers, nor do they fulfill the longing desires of the heart as does an earnest original petition, even though the latter may not be so well expressed or clothed in as good language.

The American child, from the time it is old enough to bow at its mother's knee, is taught to say the following little prayer, before retiring for the night:

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,  
And pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

This is a commendable prayer, but nevertheless, from their infancy, children should be encouraged to offer original prayers, asking for little things they need, and that the Lord help those who are dear to them; and should also be taught to expect an answer. This will be a means of developing their faith, as well as a confidence in God and in their own ability to do good.

Bread, butter, potatoes, and such like, sometimes make a good palatable meal, but if served at each meal from day to day, and week to week, with no variety, one would feel the need of a change, as something more is required in order to satisfy the demands of the system. Just so with our spiritual meals and communion with the Lord. A prayer may be offered that is very acceptable for the time and occasion, and may afterwards be oft repeated, but to continue repeating the same words, under all circumstances, the prayer becomes stale, and causes the relish for communion with the Lord to vanish.



If we thus drift into a mere form and habit, the spiritual power, sacredness and blessedness of devotion are lost.

A person may admire the prayers of others, and may take note of their zeal and use of words, and profit thereby, but after all the blessedness of true devotion to God comes through one's own individuality and originality. Be natural, be yourself, and do not try to be someone else while talking to God. Make up your own prayers in plain, simple language, and forget your surroundings, in accordance with the situation, sufficiently to have an earnest, unbroken communion with him. In this way it will soon be possible to reach a point where you will not lack for words to say, and you will also know better how to enter into the secret of his presence and enjoy the riches of his grace.

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## XLVIII

### The Results

**A**T one time the Lord made himself manifest in a peculiar manner to Solomon, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." This caused Solomon to feel his insignificance, and to humble himself. Although he was king, he said, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." Seeing now open before him the great store-house of good things, where he was privileged to make a requisition according to his desires, there was nothing to prevent his asking for riches and having an abundance of this world's goods, but he felt humble in the sight of God, and realized his responsibilities as a servant of the Almighty. In such an attitude of submission before God, what could he ask other than that which would best fit him for the service he was to render unto the Lord? He did not call for the riches and pleasures of this world, but asked for wisdom and understanding, saying, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad."

His petition pleased the Lord, insomuch that as a result he not only gave Solomon those things he desired, but said to him "I have given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor."

A humble heart, with a spirit of perfect submission to the will of God, and with a desire above all things to

please him, and to do that which would enable one to render the most efficient service for him, is sure to result in great good and bring satisfaction to the soul.

The Lord said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14. Therefore, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," (Hebrews 10:22) and the Lord will honor our faith and efforts to serve him, and will also enable us to enjoy the blessings which he has promised to the faithful.

Whatever the issue may be, take it to the Lord in prayer, and "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalms 84:11.

Ps 91

## XLIX

### Receiving the Reward

**T**HERE is something beautiful about the life of the Christian, which is unknown to the world. His communion with the Lord is a source of pleasure, and brings to the soul happiness beyond expression. In times of sorrow and grief, trouble or danger, he finds a place of security—a refuge; and realizes the truthfulness of the words of the Psalmist, when he said: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalms 91:1. There is not only comfort, joy and blessings along the pathway in this life, as a result of the prayers offered, and a reward for the devotional life here on earth, but there is that consolation of a hope of the life beyond, where there shall be never-ending bliss.

The life here is just what we make it. It lies within our power, by the help of the Lord, to enjoy the sweetness of heaven in our souls amidst the turmoils and sorrows round about us, no matter which way the winds of oppression may blow. Though at times dark clouds may hover near, yet the devoted Christian learns to patiently wait on him who is mighty to deliver, knowing that the sun is still shining behind the cloud, and will soon break forth in all its splendor.

Are you desiring rich blessings from the Lord? Then step into the pathway where such are to be had in abun-

dance. This is done by measuring your life by the Word of God, or, in other words, by a life of obedience to his will. It comes about through prayer—believing prayer. Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Luke 11:9. The Apostle gives these words of consolation: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32.

Do not hesitate to ask for your share of that which rightfully belongs to you. The doubter generally fails to praise the Lord for blessings of the past, and for the many good things of the present, therefore, has but little hope of the future, and is thus robbed of the glory while he lives a life of fearfulness. Give no place to doubts, but “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” 1 Peter 5:7.

“What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24. It is the prayer of faith that counts. Press forward, cast aside all restraints, and be free in the Lord. Decide that you will now have the benefits and blessings that belong to the Christian in this life, and, with such a decision and determination, the hindrances to prevailing prayer will vanish; and by faith the eternal reward will be in sight.

As this life draws to a close, the heavenly prize, in all its beauty and splendor, will be presented to our view, and the changing scenes of earth will give place to those more resplendent.

As the time of departure draws near, the faithful can say: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord,

the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2:10.

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